

ranges of views and best serves the American people.

A special thank you to my friend and colleague, Chairman KENNEDY, whose Senate career has been dedicated to providing health care to those in need. Senator KENNEDY's activism and determination made this day possible. My Senate colleagues and I and millions of Americans who may finally see the day when there is quality affordable health care owe him our gratitude and thanks.

In closing, of all injustices, Martin Luther King once observed: "Injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

This day is a victory for Ohio families, it is a victory for seniors and middle-class families around the Nation who deserve the humane justice of an affordable health care system that works for all of them.

We have a historic opportunity to make fundamental improvements to our Nation's health care system. We must not squander it—not in this Nation, not at this time.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONOR FLIGHT VETERANS TRIBUTE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize an inspiring group of World War II veterans from the Commonwealth who visited our Nation's Capitol on the 65th anniversary of the D-day invasion. The noble work of the Honor Flight Program and the leaders at its Bluegrass Chapter made it possible for these World War II veterans to visit their memorial on the National Mall free of charge. I have been privileged to participate in previous Honor Flights from Kentucky, and I very much regret that my schedule prevented me from attending the one that took place on June 6, 2009. I hope to have the opportunity to join participants from my home State on Honor Flight trips in the near future.

I wish to express my tremendous gratitude to the 66 Kentucky veterans who were here that day for having served to protect our great Nation's principles from the enemies of freedom. As Americans, we are forever indebted to the heroic men and women of the U.S. military who defend this great Nation and all it represents. In fighting for prosperity and freedom around the world, the veterans of World War II risked everything, earning the title of the "greatest generation."

As General Eisenhower said in his message to the troops just before the invasion at Normandy: "The eyes of

the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you." These words ring true, even after 65 years, as our military continues to challenge threats to freedom, democracy and the American way of life.

Our country continues to do its best to honor the incredible bravery and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform. The Honor Flight Program is a reflection of the admiration and appreciation that all Americans have for the military. I take great pride in representing many brave veterans from Kentucky and in doing what I can to show our Nation's reverence for them.

The names of the 66 World War II veterans from the Commonwealth are as follows:

Richard Straub; George Hoffman; Robert Willman; Charles Junkins; Norman Reiss; William Taylor; Mary Phillips; Walter Brumfield, Sr.; Raymond Bumann; Lawrence Mayfield; Thomas Crump; Albert Tomassetti; Eugene Heimerdinger; Fletcher Williams; Paul Lawson; Millard Allen; Paul Jordan; Joseph McConnell; Harry Greaves; Robert Bohan.

John McCord, Jr.; Louis Stafford; Walter Martin; Stanley Adkins; James Thomas; William Wilson; Harold Hoover; Kenneth Elliott; Johnie Hayes; Peter Johnson, Sr.; Robert O'Bryan; Frank Rose; Norbert Gnadinger; Martin Lambright; Robert Zangmeister, Sr.; Walter Jewell, Jr.; James Keene; George Pope; Richard Thompson; Orland Warth.

Raymond Ludwick; Arthur Lowe; Ralph Hammerle; Roy Six; Arthur Wissing; Louis Guettzow; Howard Mather; Allen Kessler; Harold Finnell; William Boyd; Wilbert Block; Claude Decker; George Garth; Joseph Wilson; Lloyd Hoagland; William Zeitz; Vincent Heuser; Oscar Disney, Jr.; Nat Bailen; George Keltner; Richard Zogg; Taylor Davidson; Pauline Thompson; Henry Hardy, Jr.; Abner McMaster; Stanley Fischer.

HIV TRAVEL AND IMMIGRATION BAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Department of Health and Human Services has taken an important and overdue step toward ending our Nation's discriminatory ban on HIV-positive visitors and immigrants.

On July 2, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services published proposed regulations that would lift the HIV travel and immigration ban. This policy change would remove HIV from the list of "communicable diseases of public health significance."

While we all know that HIV infection is a serious health condition, it does not represent a communicable disease that is a significant threat for transmission and spread to the U.S. population through casual contact. Officially ending this long-standing ban will help remove the stigma and discrimination often associated with HIV.

The United States is one of 12 countries in the world that ban HIV-positive visitors, nonimmigrants and immigrants. It seems illogical that the United States, a country that is a leader in the fight against the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, should legally ban all non-Americans who are HIV-positive.

The current travel and immigration ban prohibits HIV-positive foreign nationals from entering the United States unless they obtain a special waiver. This waiver is difficult to obtain and only allows for short-term travel. Immigrants who want to become legal permanent residents by applying for a green card are subject to a medical exam. Many individuals who have been denied a green card because of their HIV status confront a dilemma—either they go home where they might not have access to effective treatment or violate American law by remaining in the United States.

The ban undermines public health efforts by keeping researchers, advocates and experts from even entering the country. The current regulation stigmatizes and discriminates against people living with HIV and AIDS without justification and has serious consequences on individuals, families and our Nation. It separates loved ones, denies American businesses access to talented workers, and bars students and tourists from accessing opportunities and supporting our economy. Due to the ban, there have not been any international conferences on HIV/AIDS in the United States since 1990.

The ban originated in 1987, and was explicitly codified by Congress in 1993, despite efforts in the public health community to remove the ban when Congress reformed U.S. immigration law in the early 1990s. While immigration law excludes foreigners with any "communicable disease of public health significance" from entering the U.S., only HIV was ever explicitly singled out in the Immigration and Nationality Act. For all other communicable diseases, the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines whether a particular disease is of public health significance and should therefore constitute a ground for excluding noncitizens from entering or immigrating to the United States.

Last year, I strongly supported the Tom Lantos and Henry Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, which Congress passed and the President signed into law. Included was a provision that removed the language from the Immigration and Nationality Act mandating that HIV be on the list of diseases that bar entry to the United States. This provision returned regulatory authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to determine whether HIV should remain on a list of communicable diseases that bar foreign nationals from entering the United States.

By proposing this regulation the administration is making a clear statement that the United States does not discriminate against people with HIV and does not endorse misconceptions of the past. I look forward to seeing the proposed regulation finalized in the coming months.

COMBATING CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the world goes through this difficult economic period it is important that we continue efforts that began when times were better.

A June 10, 2009 article in the New York Times entitled "Battle to Halt Graft Scourge in Africa Ebbs" notes that because of a series of assassinations, dismissals, and changes in power across the African Continent, some of Africa's previous efforts to fight corruption are weakening. It is estimated that a trillion dollars obtained through corrupt practices changes hands every year around the world, and a large part of it in Africa. This staggering amount is often the revenues from the extraction of natural resources like oil or diamonds, but instead of going to help the impoverished people of the country where the resources are located, it too often goes to line the pockets of corrupt officials. If it were possible to reduce by just one-quarter the amount of money stolen, the amount saved would be five times as much as we spend annually on foreign aid.

On his recent visit to Accra, Ghana, President Obama made it clear that the responsibility for good government and with it, development, in Africa ultimately rests on the shoulders of Africans. He said "repression can take many forms, and too many nations, even those that have elections, are plagued by problems that condemn their people to poverty. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves . . . or if police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims twenty percent off the top . . . or the head of the port authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery. That is not democracy, that is tyranny, even if occasionally you sprinkle an election in there. And now is the time for that style of governance to end."

I wholeheartedly agree with the President, and I also know that bribery depends on at least two parties—those who get paid and those who pay. Halliburton/KBR, a name we have all become familiar with for brazenly overcharging American taxpayers in Iraq, is reportedly under investigation for allegedly paying over \$100 million in bribes in Nigeria in order to secure oil-field contracts. Although we do our best to investigate terrorist financing, U.S. banks are not required to fully investigate the sources of their funds, and the proceeds of corruption can sometimes get through. Offshore shell companies and bank accounts, and lax rules for identification of account holders, make it relatively easy to launder illicit money. The lack of information across borders hampers investigations and prosecution efforts and slows the return of stolen money.

The New York Times article tells the story of Nuhu Ribadu, the former director of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Nigeria, who led a courageous effort to begin to rid Nigeria of its endemic corruption problem but barely avoided an assassination attempt and was dismissed last year after reportedly refusing a \$15 million bribe from a state official he was investigating. In testimony before the House Financial Services Committee earlier this year, Mr. Ribadu pleaded that this country do all that it can to fight this global problem saying, "What can you do as a country, as a good people of the world, as leaders, to help be on the side of the 140 million desperately poor Nigerians?"

While there is no question that this is a problem that requires the hard work and sacrifice of citizens of the countries where these crimes are taking place, we also need to do what we can in the United States to stand with those people who are taking risks to rid their countries of the corruption that destroys governments and whole societies.

There are a few things we can start doing now. We can do more to hold our domestic banks accountable for the money they have. We can put regulations in place that will make the holding of illegal international money no longer a profitable enterprise. We can open up international channels of communication to make sure that, while maintaining appropriate levels of privacy, we provide investigators overseas access to the records they need to track down and prosecute cases of graft in their countries. We should do all we can to prosecute those who receive bribes by cutting off funds and, as much as possible, expanding our courts' jurisdictions to prosecute those who extort money. And finally, we can come down hard on companies in the United States that are using bribery to increase their profitability in third world markets.

This is a problem that many brave Africans have tried to tackle head on, and it has cost some of them their lives. Let us make sure that we are doing all we can to help.

COMMENDING TOM AND MAGGIE RYAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to salute Tom Ryan and his daughter, Maggie, of Shelburne, VT, for their goodwill gesture at a recent Boston Red Sox game.

Last week, Tom and Maggie were at Fenway Park cheering on the Red Sox, and they ended up with the baseball David Ortiz—better known in Red Sox Nation as Big Papi—hit over the Green Monster for the 300th home run of his career.

I had the good fortune to meet Big Papi last year at the White House celebration honoring the 2007 Red Sox World Series championship, and I was delighted to learn Tom and Maggie had

the opportunity to meet Big Papi too and present him with the historic ball.

In honor of the Ryans, and this important moment in Red Sox history, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the Burlington Free Press's story, Vermont Man, Daughter Make Big Papi's Day, by Sam Hemingway be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, July 12, 2009]

VERMONT MAN, DAUGHTER MAKE BIG PAPI'S DAY

(By Sam Hemingway)

SHELBURNE.—Going to Fenway Park is akin to going to church for die-hard Boston Red Sox fan Tom Ryan.

So imagine what it was like for the 46 year-old Shelburne resident to meet David "Big Papi" Ortiz, Boston's beloved slugger—inside the team clubhouse and within sight of the locker room.

Ryan and his daughter, Maggie, had that Red Sox dream-come-true moment Thursday night when Ryan ended up in possession of the baseball that Ortiz ripped for his 300th homer in the first inning of what ended in an 8-6 loss to the Kansas City Royals.

"It didn't get out by much," Ryan said, recalling the moment the ball zoomed off Ortiz's bat and hit the top ledge of the Green Monster wall in left field.

The ball ricocheted off the wall and fell to the ground below Section 33, Box 165, Row LL, a spot that overlooks left field half way between third base and the Green Monster.

That's where Ryan and Maggie were, in Seats 5 and 6, when Royals' leftfielder Jose Guillen picked up the ball and, acknowledging the appeals in the seats above, tossed the ball into the stands—and into Ryan's hands.

"We were just excited because it was a Big Papi home run," Ryan said. "People around us were all charged up, too."

Moments later, a security guard approached Ryan and asked him to come with him. Ryan thought perhaps he had done something wrong and that maybe he and Maggie were going to get kicked out of Fenway Park.

Instead, the guard told him the homer was Ortiz's 300th and that Big Papi had asked for someone to find out if he could get the ball back. Ryan said he was glad to comply with Ortiz's request.

"To me, it was the right thing to do," he said.

So he, Maggie and the security guard walked over to the team's clubhouse.

Along the way, a representative of Major League Baseball approached them and questioned Ryan about how he got the ball, just to make sure it really was the one that Ortiz had just hit. Only 19 active baseball players have hit 300 or more homers.

When the group entered the clubhouse to make the ball exchange, a door across the room opened and in walked Ortiz, grinning from ear to ear.

He's a mountain of a man," Ryan said. "Big smile, big hands, big heart. He was genuinely very grateful, kind of giddy, kind of excited."

Ryan said he asked Ortiz what he was going to do with the ball and said Ortiz told him and Maggie that he had talked to his dad that morning and was going to give the ball to his father while visiting him during the upcoming All Star break.

In return for the ball, Ortiz gave Ryan and Maggie one of his bats and signed it. Maggie,