

December 2, 2010, from injuries he sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol. He was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Khost Province, Afghanistan. He was 45 years old.

A native of Kirtland, NM, Sergeant Thode graduated from Catalina High School, in Tucson, AZ, and the University of Arizona. Sergeant Thode served as an officer in the Farmington, New Mexico, police department for 14 years. He was a senior member of the SWAT team and also served in the Army National Guard, deploying for tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During his years of service, Sergeant Thode distinguished himself through his courage, dedication to duty, and willingness to take on any job. Fellow soldiers respected his intensity, and they relied heavily on his leadership. Sergeant Thode was awarded numerous medals and awards, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Army Commendation Medal, two Army Achievement Medals, and the Army Good Conduct Medal.

Sergeant Thode worked on the front lines of battle, serving in the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan. He is remembered by those who knew him as a consummate professional with an unending commitment to excellence. Friends at the Farmington Police Department note that he was beloved by his colleagues. They remember Sergeant Thode as an effective manager who led by example.

Mark Twain once said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." Sergeant Thode's service was in keeping with this sentiment—by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

Sergeant Thode braved the chaos of combat zone throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. And though his fate on the battlefield was uncertain, he pushed forward, protecting America's citizens, her safety, and the freedoms we hold dear. For his service and the lives he touched, Sergeant Thode will forever be remembered as one of our country's bravest.

To Sergeant Thode's entire family—I cannot imagine the sorrow you must be feeling. I hope that, in time, the pain of your loss will be eased by your pride in James's service and by your knowledge that his country will never forget him. We are humbled by his service and his sacrifice.

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN SOLARZ

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend and former colleague of mine, former Congressman Stephen Solarz, who passed away late last month at the age of 70. I would like to take this moment to convey my heartfelt condolences to Stephen's wife, Nina, the rest of his family, and everyone else who knew,

worked with, and enjoyed Stephen during his life.

Stephen and I were both elected to the House of Representatives for the first time in 1974, members of a historic class of 75 Democratic freshmen who came to Washington in the wake of the Watergate scandal. Stephen remained a stalwart of the House, serving the people of his Brooklyn-based congressional district with distinction for nearly two decades.

Throughout his tenure in Congress, Stephen was always attentive to the needs of his constituents, even going so far as to nickname himself "Representative Pothole" for his work on local issues. But in spite of this, Stephen's tenure was perhaps most clearly defined by his work on foreign policy issues. As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee throughout his nine terms, Stephen demonstrated a strong and abiding passion for world affairs. Indeed, during his first month in office, Stephen went on an 18-day congressional delegation trip to the Middle East, meeting with the leaders of Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.

Beginning in 1979, Stephen took on some important leadership positions within the committee, serving first as chairman of the Subcommittee on African Affairs, and subsequently as chairman of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. During that time, Stephen was absolutely committed to ensuring that human rights and respect for the rule of law remained key pillars of U.S. policy in those regions.

He was an uncompromising supporter of sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa; one of Congress's most vocal and persistent critics of the authoritarian government led by Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines; and a tireless advocate of peace in Cambodia. Stephen was also a strong proponent of diplomacy and engagement, becoming the first United States Congressman to visit North Korea in nearly three decades in 1980. And perhaps just as significantly, Stephen was a committed defender of the House of Representatives who worked extremely hard to carve out a more prominent place for that body in foreign policy discussions.

As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee myself, I had the opportunity to work with Stephen on a number of occasions. And I must say that I was consistently impressed by Stephen's tenacity, intelligence, and commitment to justice and democracy. In nearly everything he did as a Member of Congress, Stephen was always well-prepared, knew the issues inside and out, and was not afraid to challenge those with whom he disagreed. That is the Stephen Solarz that my colleagues and I got to know over the years, and that is, in my view, the kind of Congressman Stephen will most be remembered as.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere condolences to Stephen's family and all those individuals who, like me, had the privilege of knowing

him over the years. And I take this opportunity to thank Stephen for his many years of service to this country and his tireless efforts to create a more just and peaceful world.

REMEMBERING RICHARD HOLBROOKE

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I pay tribute to the memory of my friend Richard Holbrooke, who passed away earlier this week. Richard was a masterful diplomat who brought his extraordinary skills to bear on some of the thorniest issues in U.S. foreign policy. Every step of the way, from his tremendous accomplishments at the Dayton Accords to his work as U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, he showed his deep commitment to our country, and to serving the greater good the world over.

I came to know Richard when we travelled to Africa together in 1999, when he was serving as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. He had never been to Africa before, and yet on the trip he was able to thoroughly grasp the complex issues facing the continent immediately. His brilliance was apparent, and it enabled him to identify emerging issues quickly and push for critical action. On that trip our purpose was to focus on the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but we also saw the incredible devastation of the HIV/AIDS crisis firsthand. Richard called then-U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and told him that the Security Council needed to address AIDS directly. When the Secretary-General responded that the Security Council only addressed security issues, Richard replied that this was, indeed, a security issue. He was right, and the Security Council's subsequent discussion was a turning point as the world community began to understand the depth and severity of the crisis on the African continent.

In the years since, Richard always made time to discuss foreign policy issues with me, and he always truly listened and wanted to understand my point of view, even when we disagreed. This was especially true of his work on Afghanistan and Pakistan. We didn't always see eye to eye about U.S. policy in the region, but he always reached out to me and solicited my views, and I was so appreciative of that. Those efforts on his part said volumes about him and his thoughtful approach to the complex issues he worked on with such commitment and such skill.

We had breakfast the morning after one of his last trips. I could see the toll his work was taking on him, but he was terrific to be with as usual. He was completely engaging and interested in my perspective, yet still managed to work the whole room, multitasking as always.

Richard Holbrooke was an extraordinary man of many talents who spent his life building a better, more just

world for us all. His many accomplishments will live on as a testament to his profound commitment to our nation and to a life of public service. But for me, I will simply miss him as a friend.

THANKING STAFF

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to say thank you to the wonderful staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Earlier this week I had the privilege of chairing my final hearing in that committee, and I want to take a moment to extend my thanks and gratitude to those who have made this committee run so smoothly and professionally over the years.

Bertie Bowman's tenure here dates back to Senator Fulbright, and his extraordinary career, as the longest serving African American on Capitol Hill, speaks volumes about his character and commitment. It has been a true pleasure seeing Bertie at every hearing and it is largely thanks to his efforts, that our hearings run so smoothly.

Meg Murphy, the committee's protocol and foreign travel coordinator, has done a truly wonderful job ensuring that our travel, business meetings, and committee coffees always went off without a hitch. Her phenomenal attention to detail and thoroughness, in addition to her dedication and good humor has made her an invaluable asset to the committee.

I would also like to recognize Samantha Hamilton, Susan Oursler, as well as Gail Coppage for their hard work and dedication.

Last, I would like to thank Frank Lowenstein, staff director of the committee, whom I have gotten to know over the years, including during a trip we took together to the Middle East. I had the privilege of knowing Frank's father, Al Lowenstein, and I can say without a doubt how proud he would be of his son Frank.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MILWAUKEE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I recognize and congratulate the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council, MBCTC, on the occasion of their 100th anniversary.

For the past 100 years the MBCTC has literally built Milwaukee. Many of today's notable Milwaukee landmarks and buildings like the Petit National Ice Center, the Performing Arts Center, the Bradley Center, County Stadium, then Miller Park, Potawatomi Bingo and Casino, the Port Washington and Elm Road Generating Stations and most recently the Marquette Interchange are owed to the tireless work of members of the MBCTC.

Not only has the MBCTC truly had a hand in shaping the Milwaukee we know and love today but it has done so while tending to its membership, the

men and women of the building trades who make it all possible. The MBCTC remains true to its founding principles to represent its members in the building and construction trades for justice on the job, better wages and never sacrificing quality for its customers. For a century, their true commitment to members and their families as well as to our Milwaukee community has stood on solid foundation.

On behalf of our State and Nation, I join this centennial celebration in recognition of the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council. Let us honor their hard work and long history of building up Milwaukee into a great place to visit, work, live and raise a family.●

ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL DEBT

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today I wish to introduce to you one of my constituents, Lawrence "Rip" Kirby of Rutland, VT, who has written to me outlining his ideas on how Congress can and should address our \$13.8 trillion national debt in a fair and sensible way. I am pleased the citizens of Vermont are engaged on this issue, which is of critical importance to not only our State, but indeed the Nation. The decisions that we make on the Senate floor today will impact generations of Americans to come. That is why I would like to share with you what Mr. Kirby wrote:

To reduce the deficit and accumulated debt we must understand their root causes and history:

Short-term problem: The near-collapse of the economy was arrested by means of deficit spending, including corporate bailouts, extended unemployment benefits, and stimulus initiatives. While arguably necessary to stave off an even worse catastrophe, these measures have added to the deficit and the debt.

Solution(s): Our emphasis should not be on recovery of sunk costs but on prevention of future disasters. Break up "too large to fail" businesses through anti-trust laws. Regulate imprudent, secretive, or unfathomable financial arrangements like derivatives. Increase regulated safety margins like reserve requirements for banks and loan limits based on borrower credit ratings. Eliminate conflicts of interest like permitting bond rating agencies to have a financial stake in the companies they rate.

Medium-term problem: Our wars overseas have been funded by massive deficits with no real strategy for repayment. The unexpected length and intractability of these conflicts exacerbates the problem.

Solution(s): Stop the financial bleeding and provide a financial transfusion. To stop the bleeding we must get out of these conflicts within a short time (two years at most). Continue intelligence-gathering and maintain air power, but get the boots off the ground. To provide a transfusion, enact a temporary and progressive "war surtax" with a sunset provision.

Long-term problem: Entitlement spending (Medicare, Social Security, etc.) has exceeded its funding as America's longevity has climbed faster than its typical retirement age without tax increases to keep up. The mass retirement of the baby boomers will aggravate this problem as they become greater

consumers of entitlements and a lesser source of taxes.

Solution(s): Recognize that longevity is really an advantage, and make better use of people's lengthening ability to work and to contribute. In short, this means gradually raising the age of entitlement eligibility. We must also end the regressive and irrational Social Security tax exemption for earnings above \$108,000.

Long term problem: Our K-12 school system has deteriorated while foreign students have surged ahead in critical subjects like math, science, and language skills. The underlying cause is debated endlessly, but I believe we have replaced the hard work of learning with trendy feel-good initiatives that represent the path of least resistance for both educators and students. We also underfund education, thereby encouraging the employment of second-rate teachers, curricula, and facilities. This exacerbates the deficit by degrading our tax base as emerging generations of Americans are prepared for only menial jobs paying low wages.

Solution(s): Stop experimenting and do what works—get back to basics and pay for excellence. Reward teachers who cultivate competence. Emphasize math, science, and language skills, as well as less tangible, but important skills like inquiry and logic. Recognize sports programs as a way to teach critical social skills, not as a career path. Treat standardized testing as a means to excellence, not as an end in itself. And finally, forget self esteem—it will come on its own when it is earned."

Lawrence "Rip" Kirby
Rutland, VT.

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to share with you these words of wisdom from an average Vermonter. I hope my colleagues in the Senate take note of Mr. Kirby's sage advice.●

RECOGNIZING HARBOR FARM

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, every holiday season, Americans head to stores in droves to buy the perfect gift for their loved ones or friends during the holiday season. Many will visit small businesses, such as gift shops and local retailers, which offer a variety of products. There is one such store in my home State of Maine, Harbor Farm, that helps keep the Christmas spirit alive year round through a variety of products that celebrate the season.

Harbor Farm is located on Little Deer Isle, a tiny island located off Maine's coast in Penobscot Bay. The island is both a picturesque summer vacationland as well as the year-round home to 300 residents. And Harbor Farm caters to locals and tourists alike with a variety of regional and international gifts, from candles to apparel and most everything in between. The store also carries gifts made by another local small business, the Deer Isle Granite Company, including beautiful clocks in the shape of the State of Maine as well as cutting boards and coasters.

Additionally, Harbor Farm has a unique "Christmas Room," with a plethora of thoughtful and creative goods and wares. More than simply holiday-themed gifts, the Christmas Room features exceptional items inspired by Maine, including blueberry jewelry