

out the older cars with newer, safer models. But more needs to be done. Metro needs to demonstrate safety improvements it has been making and ensure that it will continue to make safety its top priority if it expects continued financial support.

More broadly, this accident has highlighted that the safety of our public transportation systems should be a priority nationwide. We have been working in the Senate developing a legislative approach to ensuring proper safety standards are in place. Incredibly, FTA currently has no authority to regulate our Nation's transit agencies or develop national safety standards. A new draft bill developed by Senators DODD, SHELBY, and MENENDEZ will give FTA the tools to develop a national transit safety plan while also providing states the resources and flexibility to develop more robust transit safety oversight. The Banking Committee, of which I am a member, will soon consider this legislation and I am pleased that we are moving towards making progress in this area so that preventable tragedies, such as the one that occurred a year ago, will be a thing of the past.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST CHRISTOPHER W. OPAT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to SPC Christopher W. Opat, an Iowan who gave his life in service to his country as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He was from Lime Springs, IA, and graduated from Crestwood High School in 1999. Christopher attended Iowa Lakes Community College before enlisting in the Army. He was remembered as a hard worker with a good sense of humor. Specialist Opat was serving his third deployment to Iraq. During his brief military career, he was twice awarded the Army Good Conduct Medal and also received the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon. Our Nation is indebted to individuals like Specialist Opat whose tremendous sacrifice in defense of freedom must never be forgotten. The loss of such a dedicated, patriotic American is extremely sad and my prayers will be with Christopher's mother Mary Katherine, his father Leslie, and all his family and friends at this difficult time. I ask all my colleagues in the Senate to join me today in paying tribute to the courageous and selfless service of SPC Christopher Opat.

NOMINATION OF S. LESLIE IRELAND

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge the confirmation of Ms. Leslie Ireland, the President's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Intelligence and Analysis.

This is an individual who is well qualified, nominated to an important

national security position, and whose nomination has sparked no opposition or controversy to the best of my knowledge. Nonetheless, for more than 3 weeks her nomination has languished on the Senate calendar as Ms. Ireland has waited to be confirmed.

Let me speak briefly about Ms. Ireland and the position to which she has been nominated.

Leslie Ireland is a 25-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency. She has substantial experience in just about all aspects of the intelligence profession. Following a successful career at the CIA, her two most recent positions were that of Iran mission manager in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and as one of the President's daily intelligence briefers.

In both capacities, she has worked extensively with all parts of the intelligence community. As the President's briefer, Ms. Ireland has been familiar not only with the breadth of intelligence analysis the community produces, but also the policy context in which intelligence is used.

She worked directly for the Nation's premier intelligence consumer—the President. His evaluation of her professionalism and capability is reflected in the fact that he nominated her for this Senate-confirmed position.

As Iran mission manager, Leslie Ireland was given the responsibility over intelligence collection and analysis of what is perhaps our Nation's most challenging intelligence target. She oversaw, prioritized, and directed efforts to understand the Iranian government, nuclear program, military, and society. This is a position with deep management and analytic challenges.

Through Ms. Ireland's work as Iran mission manager, she was already well known to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence before she was nominated to be an Assistant Secretary of Treasury. She had appeared at numerous hearings and far more briefings, both for committee members and the staff.

Under the leadership of both of our past chairmen, Senators ROBERTS and ROCKEFELLER, the committee had an Iran study group to follow, oversee, and authorize intelligence activities with respect to Iran. The staff met often with Ms. Ireland, and I believe it was a productive relationship on both sides.

So it was no surprise that when Ms. Ireland was nominated on April 12, the committee moved quickly to consider the nomination. She was voted out of the committee on May 25 with the committee's unanimous support. She is ready to assume her new duties, and it is well past time for the Senate to act.

For the benefit of my colleagues, let me say a few words about the Assistant Secretary's position. It is a fairly new one, having been created in December 2003 in that year's Intelligence Authorization Act.

The Office of Intelligence and Analysis at Treasury has one foot within

the Department of the Treasury, assisting the Secretary and other senior departmental officials to set policies on sanctions and declarations.

A notable recent example is the effort by the Treasury Department to push, successfully, for the strongest international sanctions to date against Iran in United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1929. Sanctions and international efforts such as this require careful analysis and are the product of intelligence designed to shine a light on the financial and other illicit activities of bad actors, including in this case the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.

At the same time, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis has its other foot inside the intelligence community. Its personnel focus and help prioritize the financial intelligence collection efforts of those agencies that collect human, signals, and geospatial intelligence that analysts need.

The Treasury office also provides expertise on financial and economic matters that are necessary for broader intelligence community issues. For example, a recent issue of great interest is the financing of terrorist groups like al-Qaida and the militant and extremist groups with which they operate, like the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and the Pakistani Taliban, the TTP. The Office of Intelligence and Analysis helps inform the intelligence community on this topic.

It is critical to understand the financial activities of these groups both to understand how they operate and to provide keys to disrupting them.

In Afghanistan, our troops face a well-funded Taliban enemy that relies on illicit funding for its lifeblood—and for the ammunition and improvised explosive devices that put our troops' lives at risk.

In the tribal areas of Pakistan, al-Qaida affiliated terrorist groups may be seeking to fund attacks on our homeland such as the unsuccessful car bomb attempt in Times Square. Among the most important impacts of the recent death of the third highest ranking al-Qaida figure, Shaykh Sa'id Al-Masri, is the anticipated loss to the organization's fundraising.

As North Korea continues its erratic violent behavior and considers a transition of power from Kim Jong Il to his son Kim Jong Eun, its economy has been further wrecked by a disastrous devaluation of the currency.

These are the issues that confront the Assistant Secretary of Treasury for Intelligence and Analysis. It is a position that has been vacant since September 2009. There is no excuse for that vacancy to continue another week. The Senate has before it a nominee who is well qualified to fill this role. She has the full support of the Intelligence Committee, and there has been no controversy or opposition to her throughout the confirmation process.

I urge the Senate to confirm Leslie Ireland.

CELEBRATING WEST VIRGINIA DAY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I call to the Senate's attention that on June 20, 147 years ago, a 35th State was added to our great Nation: West Virginia, whose birthday is a time for us to remember proudly our state's rich history, culture and unique qualities.

Nearly 150 years ago, West Virginia became the only State to have seceded from a Confederate entity to join the Union. Each year after, West Virginia has continued to develop its own identity and contribute to our Nation's fabric. Our State's history, past and present, is rich with development and progress that fills West Virginians with pride every day.

West Virginia's mountainous terrain, countless river valleys, and rich natural resources have driven our State's history and economy, and draw visitors from across the globe. Our State possesses timeless landmarks and attractions, and has an abundance of natural beauty to share.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "The Sun does not always shine in West Virginia, but the people always do." This statement is a true testament not only to the kind and hospitable nature of our citizens, but also to our fortitude, determination and abiding faith.

Though a "stranger to blue water," West Virginia has been no stranger to turmoil throughout its history. We have been and will continue to be undaunted in overcoming the challenges of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

This year we stood together to face the tragic explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine that claimed the lives of 29 miners and left a community and our whole state in mourning, calling again on the steadfast spirit of our people. The devastating effects of the explosion left mining families holding their breath for news of loved ones. Rescue teams and the State's Red Cross and Salvation Army expeditiously rose to the challenge to offer much needed support. True to custom, West Virginians across the State were ready and remain eager to lend a helping hand to their neighbors affected by the disaster.

And this year, like so many others before, we have called on the West Virginia National Guard to serve the State when we need them most, and to perform invaluable duties outside our borders—providing security on a global scale. Our West Virginia National Guard has garnered top rankings for readiness for many years, showcasing the motivation and commitment behind each one of our men and women serving our country.

West Virginia possesses the unique ability to make the traditions we have historically treasured as much a part of our bright future as our accomplished past. Our State continues to retain its culture as an integral part of our identity. Festivals and events, like Bridge Day at the New River Gorge

Bridge in Fayetteville and the Vandalia Gathering in Charleston, bring older and younger generations together to enjoy State treasures and traditions. Blues festivals can be found across our State, and from Martinsburg to Mullens you can find world-class artisans and craftsmen in the fields of glass blowing, classic woodwork, and folk art.

Thanks to West Virginia's dedication to education, our academic institutions consistently bring new discoveries to the fields of science and technology. And, our athletic programs continue to rank among the best in the country. West Virginia University's men's basketball team reached the Final Four in this year's NCAA Basketball Tournament representing the state on a national stage. And, football fans across our state eagerly await an upcoming football season that promises to be successful for all of our programs in West Virginia.

There is so much to honor, celebrate, and be thankful for on West Virginia's 147th birthday. Our past, present, and future are as colorful as our Appalachian hills in autumn. Our people know and live well by our motto—Montani Semper Liberi—"Mountaineers are always free," and our strong work ethic, one of God and family, and indubitable spirit makes our country and our State great. With these words ever present, and on behalf of myself and my fellow West Virginians, I proudly wish the happiest of birthdays to my home State, West Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE KIMBELL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to honor Vermont's leading policymaker, Steve Kimbell, who announced his retirement on May 20 of this year. For over three decades, Mr. Kimbell has been a major presence within the political world of Vermont and is noted as the most respected and influential policy maker to walk the halls of our Statehouse.

Mr. Kimbell started his career as a lawyer at Vermont Legal Aid after completing his juris doctor from the University of Michigan Law School. Only a few years later, he was hired as lieutenant governor candidate Madeleine Kunin's campaign manager and went on to be her State planning director after she was elected Governor. Mr. Kimbell then partnered with Governor Kunin's former press secretary Bob Sherman to form Kimbell Sherman Ellis, a government and communications company that has grown into the most successful firm of its kind in the State. Kimbell Sherman Ellis developed a nationwide clientele and has additional offices in Washington, DC and Massachusetts. Along with advising and policymaking for Vermont State government, the firm provides legislative and regulatory strategy in government affairs and manages marketing and public relations campaigns nationwide.

Steve Kimbell has been credited with helping to shape almost every piece of major legislation to pass through the Vermont Statehouse. I offer my congratulations to Mr. Kimbell upon his retirement. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from the Rutland Herald that depicts the contributions that Steve Kimbell has made to the State of Vermont.

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

[From the Rutland Herald, May 30, 2010]

POLITICIAN'S POLITICIAN

[By Peter Mallary]

Steve Kimbell can be tightly wound. But the other day sitting in his office at Kimbell, Sherman & Ellis—the Montpelier-based government and communications firm he started with Bob Sherman back in 1987—he looked completely relaxed. It is a small office, which he shares with his partner's son, Nick Sherman. Kimbell's chair was kicked back. His smile was broad and available.

Steve Kimbell just quit his job.

"I never expected to work forever," he said.

Well, you could have fooled most of us.

And he has.

In most cases more than once.

Kimbell is the politician's politician, a lobbyist and counselor who has built relationships unlike any other in Vermont's political world.

He started out as a Legal Aid lawyer.

"I spent my time suing state government," he said. "Mostly welfare and Medicaid cases."

And he remains a government skeptic.

"My underlying personal philosophy is that government is very dangerous," Kimbell said. "It's a huge operation. And it breaks the law every day. This is the foundation of my advocacy for every client. All citizens need to be watchdogs. But we get paid to do it."

No shock to any who know him—Steve Kimbell's decision to retire is a political one. He tied it to Jim Douglas' decision not to run for a fifth term. He pointed out that a political shift like the one we may see this election cycle only comes along every decade or so. Whatever happens there will be a new political cast. So it seemed to him like the right time to give a different generation a chance.

There was nothing sudden about his decision. The partners in the firm have been planning for this for a year. But wary of making Kimbell a lame duck in his final legislative session they kept the story close, a remarkable accomplishment in a town that does not guard political secrets particularly well.

Not at all, most of the time.

I asked him if he could really quit.

"I have gotten up and gone to work for 40 years," he said, "either working for myself or somebody else. It will be a major change but it's worth a shot."

He says he is going to tend the farm in Tunbridge.

I am not 100 percent convinced.

Kimbell's career spans the terms of every governor since Tom Salmon—Salmon, Snelling, Kunin, Snelling again, Dean and Douglas.

He reflected.

"Governors are not noted for their sense of humor," Kimbell said, referencing a quality he values in politicians—politicians like Art Gibb, Bob Gannett and Ralph Wright.

"Snelling made an art form of being the intimidating presence in the room."