

shown that women who participate in exercise programs like Bone Builders can gain bone density while nonparticipants will continue to lose bone density.

One particular story shared with me captures how important this program is to help keep Vermonters healthy. A few years ago during a particularly rough winter, a Bone Builders participant was walking to her bird feeder and fell, injuring herself. Yards away from her house and her phone, she found the strength to drag herself back to her house. Later she told an RSVP volunteer that she would not have been able to get inside to call for help if she had not participated in Bone Builders.

Medical experts estimate that there are 1.5 million fractures per year in the United States due to osteoporosis, costing nearly \$20 million in health care services and treatments. Doctors in Vermont, understanding how important strength training programs are for seniors in order to prevent osteoporosis, have started to refer patients to local classes and hand out Bone Builders brochures. Since the program has been so successful and popular in Vermont, there are now more than 100 classes offered across our State.

The program has helped countless Vermonters not only improve their health but make connections in their communities. Some participants have recently lost spouses or have had health difficulties that may isolate them within their neighborhood and communities. The camaraderie and friendship that participants in Bone Builders find through classes often leads them to socialize outside of the program. In fact, the program has been so successful in Vermont that the Bone Builders model has been replicated in several other States, including California, Maine, Florida and Minnesota.

I am proud of the Vermonters who have taken the initiative and challenged themselves in these classes, and for the work of the volunteers who spend their time inspiring others to improve their health. I look forward to celebrating the work of RSVP Bone Builders and many other such anniversaries in the years ahead.

COMMENDING SENATOR ROLAND BURRIS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Senator Roland Burris of Illinois was sworn into office less than 2 years ago. In that short time, he has debated and voted on some of the most important legislation the Senate has considered in 40 years. During his tenure, Senator BURRIS has helped pass major reforms to end abuses by the credit card industry, to put a cop back on the beat on Wall Street, and to expand health care coverage to 32 million Americans while reducing the Federal deficit by \$143 billion. Senator BURRIS also voted to confirm the nomination of two U.S. Supreme Court Justices: Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

Senator BURRIS serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, which I chair. During his service on the committee, Senator BURRIS helped provide oversight of the military as we draw down U.S. forces in Iraq and standup Afghan forces in Afghanistan. He has helped pass weapons acquisition reform legislation and two National Defense Authorization Acts out of committee. He has helped confirm the nominations of Nation's top civilian and military leaders.

Before coming to the Senate, Roland Burris had a distinguished career in Illinois politics, as Illinois comptroller and then as the Illinois attorney general.

As Senator BURRIS ends his time here in the Senate, I thank him for his service to our Nation and wish him and his family the very best.

COMMENDING SENATOR CARTE GOODWIN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, today I rise to congratulate Senator CARTE P. GOODWIN of West Virginia for his service. When he was sworn into office in July, Senator GOODWIN assumed the seat previously held by the Chamber's longest serving and one of the most distinguished Senators in our history—Senator Robert C. Byrd, who passed away on June 28.

Before arriving in the Senate, Senator GOODWIN already had an impressive political career. As chief counsel to West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin, CARTE GOODWIN led the effort to reform mine safety rules in the wake of the Sago and Aracoma coal mine disasters that killed 14 coal miners. He also served as the chairman of the West Virginia School Building Authority.

Senator GOODWIN serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, which I chair. As a committee member, Senator GOODWIN has helped pass the National Defense Authorization Act out of committee. He has also contributed to hearings overseeing the status of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As Senator GOODWIN's time in the Senate draws to a close, I thank him for his service to our country, and I wish him and his family the very best.

WORLD STEM CELL SUMMIT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, next week, scientists, researchers, industry leaders and advocates from around the world will gather in Detroit, MI, for the sixth annual World Stem Cell Summit. By bringing together experts in medicine, genetics, business, and economic development, the summit will give a boost to global efforts aimed at finding cures for debilitating and deadly diseases, as well as bringing the important economic benefits of bioscience. By choosing Detroit as the site of this year's summit, the organizers have made a powerful statement about Michigan's commitment to this vital area of scientific exploration.

In 2008, Michigan voters approved a referendum protecting the ability of Michigan researchers to engage in research involving stem cells. This wise decision has already paid significant dividends. Researchers at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and other Michigan institutions have made significant progress even in that short time. UM has established a consortium to aid the search for treatments and cures, and a UM researcher, Dr. Eva Feldman, last year obtained FDA approval for the first ever clinical trials on a stem cell therapy for ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. Researchers at MSU are advancing work on stem cell treatments for Parkinson's disease. At Wayne State, scientists are examining how stem cells can be made more useful for a wide variety of medical purposes. These and other institutions across the State are working hard to save and improve lives, and I congratulate them for their efforts.

Michigan researchers will join others from across the country and around the world at next week's summit. They will examine not only the latest scientific advances but important subjects such as how stem cell research can contribute to economic development efforts, another area in which Michigan has quickly become a leader.

I would like to welcome those who will travel to Detroit next week and thank them for the opportunity to show what Michigan has accomplished in the stem cell field. I wish them every success as they seek to protect the health and save the lives of the millions of people coping with diseases that stem cell research might one day cure.

COMBATTING TERRORISTS' ACCESS TO FIREARMS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in May 2010, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing on how known or suspected terrorists are taking advantage of lax Federal laws to purchase firearms. The committee discussed two legislative proposals, both of which I have cosponsored, to address this weakness in current law: the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, S. 1317, and the PROTECT Act, S. 2820. S. 1317 would close the loophole in current law—known as the terror gap—that prevents the Federal Government from stopping the sale of firearms or explosives to a known or suspected terrorist—unless that individual falls under another disqualifying category. S.2820 would lengthen the time—from the current duration of 90 days to 10-years the FBI is required to keep gun transfer records that involve a purchaser on the terrorist watch list. Unfortunately, despite broad support from the law enforcement community, Congress has failed to pass these commonsense pieces of legislation.

On September 22, 2010, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a hearing entitled "Nine Years After 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland." At this hearing, I questioned FBI Director Robert Mueller about the FBI's efforts to prevent individuals on the terrorist watch list from acquiring firearms and explosives. In regard to S. 1317, I asked Director Mueller if he had an opinion as to whether or not persons on the terrorist watch list should be able to buy guns and explosives. I was pleased to hear Director Mueller's response that "all of us would want to keep weapons out of the hands of terrorists and/or persons on the terrorist watch list." This response echoes the support given at a November 2009 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing by Attorney General Eric Holder, the Nation's top law enforcement official, for legislation to close the terror gap.

In regard to S. 2820, I asked Director Mueller whether he would like to be able to keep firearm transfer records for longer than 90 days for persons on the terrorist watch list. Again, I was glad to hear that Director Mueller favors a longer period of record retention across the board, including for those persons who are on the terrorist watch list. According to Director Mueller, "retention of records gives us an ability to go back, when we identify some person, and determine whether or not there's additional information we would have in those records that would enable us to conduct a more efficient investigation."

At this hearing, Director Mueller added his voice to the chorus of support from so many law enforcement professionals for legislative solutions that address the deficiencies in current law. Closing the terror gap and increasing the duration of firearm record retention are two ways to give the law enforcement community the necessary tools to keep guns and explosives out of the hands of known and suspected terrorists. Congress should listen to the brave men and women charged with protecting the American public and, without further delay, pass these commonsense solutions.

TRIBUTE TO JIM CORLESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, as Members of the Senate, we work every day with public servants who fill an amazing variety of roles, and when one of those servants fills his or her role with exceptional skill and dedication, they deserve our praise. One such public servant, Jim Corless, the superintendent of Keweenaw National Historical Park in Michigan, is preparing to retire after nearly 30 years of Federal service, the last 3 of which have come in helping build one of the most unique national parks in the Nation.

Jim Corless came to Michigan's Copper Country from Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway,

AK, making him that rare person who moved south to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This was good fortune for those of us who care about preserving the history of Michigan's copper mining era because Jim's career had prepared him well. As a trained historian, Jim had already helped bring alive the drama of our Nation's founding, the frontier grit of the earliest Texas settlers, the history of Ozark waterways in Arkansas, and the growth of textile manufacturing in Massachusetts in parks from coast to coast.

Preserving the legacy of Michigan's copper mining industry has long been a priority for many of us Michiganders. The Keweenaw Peninsula contained perhaps the world's richest and purest deposits of copper, and from native peoples 7,000 years ago to miners in the 19th and 20th centuries, those deposits have had profound effects on human society across our Nation and on the peninsula.

The park established in 1992 to preserve that history is like no other in the Nation. Unlike the vast majority of National Park Service facilities, in which the government owns and controls the land and associated assets of the park, Keweenaw National Historical Park is an unusual public-private cooperative venture. Private citizens, nonprofit groups, and local governments own nearly all the park's historic assets, and they are managed cooperatively, with the Park Service providing coordination, advice and funding.

That calls for a superintendent who is part historian, part manager, and part diplomat. Jim has skillfully served all three roles. He has worked closely with officials at the Environmental Protection Agency to simultaneously preserve the industrial legacy of the copper mines while remediating the environmental impact of that legacy. And he has taken a leading, but always cooperative, role in bringing together the various community interests who have a stake in the park and its growth. Just one example of this work is his work to help create the Quincy Smelter Steering Committee to help preserve one of the park's most important historic resources.

Jim describes Keweenaw National Historical Park as a "parknership," and that illustrates the thoughtful way in which he has approached his job over the last 3 years. All of us who care about Michigan's vital mining past are grateful for his exceptional service, and we all wish him and his wife Mary Jane the very best as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MASTER SERGEANT JARED VAN AALST

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of MSG Jared Van Aalst, a native of Laconia, NH. Jared was killed on August 4 while stationed in Kunduz Province,

Afghanistan. He was serving on his sixth combat deployment as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Jared exemplified the very best in our military's long tradition of selfless service on behalf of this great nation.

Master Sergeant Van Aalst enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 17, 1995. After completing basic training, the signal systems specialist course and basic airborne school, he was assigned to the Headquarters Company. He later completed the Ranger indoctrination program and sniper school, and continued to rise through the ranks as a sniper team leader and squad leader. Master Sergeant Van Aalst was promoted to sniper platoon sergeant, platoon sergeant, and finally served as the non-commissioned officer in charge of Headquarters Company's 3rd Battalion Reconnaissance, Sniper and Technical Surveillance. He saw combat in both Operation Iraqi Freedom and in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

An exceptional marksman and soldier, in 2005 Master Sergeant Van Aalst defeated 147 of his brothers in arms to take first place at the service-rifle individual championship in the U.S. Army Small Arms Championships. He was later selected as a shooter and instructor for the U.S. Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning.

Master Sergeant Van Aalst's many awards include the Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Joint Service Commendation Medals, three Army commendation Medals, seven Army Achievement Medals and five Good Conduct Medals, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars, the Iraq Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars and the National Defense Service Medal with bronze service star. He was posthumously awarded a second Bronze Star Medal and a third Purple Heart Medal, as well as the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. Our Nation can never adequately thank Jared for his willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of American liberties, nor can words diminish the pain of losing this brave American. For his 15 years of service, he has earned our country's enduring gratitude and recognition.

A Laconia native, Jared was a graduate of Plymouth Regional High School in Plymouth, NH, where he was the captain of the high school wrestling team and one of the best wrestlers in the entire state in his weight class. He is remembered for his incredible drive and determination to succeed.

Jared has been laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. He is survived by his wife Katie Van Aalst, their two daughters Kaylie and Ava, and his parents Neville and Nancy Van Aalst. This brave New Hampshire son will be dearly missed by all.

I ask my colleagues and all Americans to join me in honoring the life of MSG Jared Van Aalst.