

From these auspicious beginnings, those reporting Irish ancestry in Maryland have today grown to over 700,000, according to the 2006 American Community Survey. These sons and daughters of Eire did not grow without tribulation. As famine and hunger gripped the Emerald Isle, nearly 3.5 million Irish immigrants fled to America between 1820 and 1880, engendering discriminatory reactions that often strayed into violence. Signs of “No Irish Need Apply” appeared in business windows, and young Irishmen were often drummed into service on the quayside to fight for the Union Army. Indeed, in my own home town of Baltimore, the mayoral elections of 1856, 1857 and 1858 were marred by violence, political intimidation and well-founded accusations of ballot-box stuffing, fomented by nativist political organizations, such as the Know-Nothing Party.

Irish Americans pushed past these shortsighted prejudices, time and again, and put their shoulders to the wheel of industry in America. They helped settle and farm the breadbasket of America, they took up arms in the defense of freedom and liberty, and they helped build an ever strengthening bond with the island nation of Ireland. They built strong communities around the values of hard work, perseverance, faith, and a shared remembrance of an ancestral home across the sea. Irish Americans have ever understood that great joy is only earned with great hardship, and our 35th President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, showed this ethic. In service to our country, he faced down the threat of worldwide nuclear annihilation, and pushed our Nation to do the impossible: to claim the Moon as the province of man. Irish Americans proudly continue this tradition of service, and serve at every level of public office, including in the Governor’s Mansion in Annapolis, MD, where Maryland’s favorite Irish-American son, Governor Martin O’Malley, resides.

The millions of Irish that immigrated to the United States, escaping hunger and religious persecution, chasing the elusive American dream, forever knitted Ireland and America together. It is right that we honor this bond, and take this occasion to reflect on the deeply inlaid threads of American history and tradition that sound, look, feel, and are distinctly Irish.

HOUSE HEARINGS ON MUSLIM AMERICANS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today about an issue of grave concern to me. All of us agree that America must be vigilant to stop violent extremists and terrorists who want to attack our Nation. We must do everything possible to fight terrorism and keep our country safe and free.

But as we have seen, the House of Representatives recently held a hearing on the “Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and

that Community’s Response,” targeting only Muslim Americans. This approach is the wrong way to fight terrorism.

History has shown us that terrorists can come from anywhere, from any country or from any faith. We sadly know this from the tragedy in Oklahoma City. Focusing only on one group is not only un-American, it also ignores real threats from homegrown terrorists. Unfortunately, there are extremists in every religion. We know that the terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001, had perverted the message of Islam just as people have perverted other faiths at times throughout history to justify violent acts.

America is home to millions of hard-working, patriotic Muslim Americans who stand with us in the fight against terrorism. Muslim Americans died in the attack on September 11, 2001, and Muslim-American firefighters and police officers, who rushed into the towers to save people while putting their own lives at risk, were rightly called heroes.

I am proud to represent the great State of Michigan where we benefit every day from the hard work and dedication of Muslim leaders in business, medicine, education, science and many other professions. America was founded on the premise that all of its citizens are free to practice their religion openly, without government interference. We are a country founded on the principles of equality and liberty.

I urge my colleagues to continue to forcefully fight terrorism while respecting the values that our country was built upon.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT JAY FREDERICK SIMPSON

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I rise today in honor of a man who gave his life serving the United States of America in World War II.

LT Jay Frederick Simpson was a pilot with the “Mighty Eighth” Air Force of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

On January 9, 1944, Lieutenant Simpson’s mission was to test fly a Thunderbolt P-47 over Moreton, England. But something went wrong. His plane caught fire and flipped over in the air. As the P-47 hurtled to the ground, witnesses say Lieutenant Simpson managed to guide it away from nearby homes, avoiding certain casualties. Instead that P-47 crashed in a nearby field, killing the 27-year-old pilot.

Today, LT Jay Simpson is still celebrated as a hero in England. In fact, you can find a memorial to him in that grassy field.

But for three generations following Lieutenant Simpson’s death, his heroism was overlooked by his own country. Until a year and a half ago. That is when a young man in Billings, MT, started doing some research. With help from his father and his grandfather, 14-year-old James Simpson discovered

that his great-grandfather Jay never received the recognition he earned as a fallen American hero.

Young Jim Simpson wrote me a letter, saying proper recognition of his great-grandfather’s service and sacrifice would bring about much needed closure for his family.

Indeed, honoring our heroes brings about much needed closure for all Americans. On behalf of a grateful nation, it is my tremendous honor to present LT Jay Simpson’s medals to his great-grandson.

To Jim and all the Simpson family: Let these medals be family treasures that remind you—and all of us—that this Nation will never forget Jay’s heroism. And we will never forget all Americans—known or unknown, celebrated or overlooked—who paid the ultimate price in service to the United States.

It is said that Lieutenant Simpson was a member of the Greatest Generation. But thanks to people like young Jim Simpson, I am reminded that there is greatness in all generations.

Thank you, Jim, for your hard work in allowing us to honor your great-grandfather. God bless you and your family.

REMEMBERING FRANK BUCKLES

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I was honored to participate in the events at Arlington National Cemetery to pay tribute to Frank Woodruff Buckles, the last surviving American World War I veteran and the representative of the lost generation of our “Doughboys.” It was a moving afternoon standing with so many on the knoll and seeing Frank Buckles buried in section 34, in sight of General Pershing’s grave and among many other World War I veterans. I also thought about the American flags at half mast in our embassies in the countries of our World War I allies.

Honestly though, the way I want to remember Frank Buckles is in his study, surrounded by books and telling amazing stories about the adventures of his life. Frank Buckles’ rich and colorful life is now part of our national history, our national consciousness and our national effort to pay tribute to the men and women who died in the most significant wars of the last century.

Frank’s effort to join the Army was a deliberate commitment to join military service and he was eager to get to Europe. He loved the Army and his service in World War I as an ambulance driver which exposed him to some of the worst horrors of that conflict.

After his military service, Frank Buckles continued his efforts to engage the world. His life, a long sweeping arc across the last century, included an exciting and varied life where he traveled the world, working abroad and experiencing things that most of us can only read about. As if he hadn’t endured enough suffering in the First World

War, he would later spend 3 years as a civilian POW in World War II.

When his days of being an active participant in two World Wars ended, he eventually settled into a quiet existence in Charles Town where his tractor, his farm, as well as his friends and family were enough to sustain him.

As I got to know him, I learned that his deep appreciation for books and culture was an important part of who he was. He spoke multiple languages, enjoyed talking about culture more than he did war, and was thoughtful and interested to the end.

To most of us though, Frank in the end amounted to so much more than just a man who had lived a life that was as interesting as it was unpredictable.

Frank became a symbol for the entire war for the nearly 4.5 million U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who defeated the Central Powers in the first Great War.

As the last living connection to the First World War, his importance in our collective psyche grew with each passing year. He seemed impossibly stubborn and tough and his long and wonderful life made him all the more special.

Towards the end of his life, more and more people understood just how privileged we all were to keep company with the last surviving Doughboy.

He was a link to a long ago war, not forgotten but so far in the past that the pictures that we think of when we conjure up images are all grainy and tattered.

It made it all the more amazing that Frank was the only man who could honestly look any of us in the eye and say "this is what the war was like."

More than 116,000 Americans died in World War I. Frank was an adamant proponent of remembering these heroes by establishing a National World War I Memorial on the National Mall.

I agree and support him on that effort which is why I am the proud sponsor of the bipartisan bill to truly honor our World War I veterans. The bill would create a commission to plan for the upcoming centennial, and it would rededicate the DC memorial as the DC and National World War I memorial. It would also dedicate the National World War I Museum and Memorial in Kansas City, MO. I agree with Frank Buckles on the importance of remembering our veterans and want to say again here today: I am more determined than ever to make this happen and will not give up until we get that bill passed.

Finally, I want to extend my sympathies again to Frank's daughter, Susannah Buckles Flanagan. She has lovingly looked after Frank and helped make sure his last years were lived with dignity and care.

Frank, you will be missed.

REMEMBERING CÉSAR ESTRADA CHÁVEZ

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the

life and achievements of César Estrada Chávez, a man who led our nation in the struggle for civil rights and whose efforts helped create a better future for all Americans.

On March 31, 2011, we will celebrate César Chávez Day to remember his courageous fight for justice and the lessons he taught us about the power people have when they join together to face the challenges before them.

Colorado's Hispanic community heard that message loud and clear during the days of the civil rights movement. Our State was an important stage for engaging Mexican-Americans in that time. Not only did Chávez-led efforts bring better living and working conditions to farm workers of all backgrounds in Colorado, from the Eastern Plains to the San Luis Valley and the Western Slope, but this movement also ignited service veterans, students and community leaders in Colorado to champion a cause that promoted equality, justice and empowerment. Leaders like Colorado's own Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, who as a young student labored in the beet fields and later became a respected poet and leader in the civil rights movement, joined an effort to speak for those who felt they had no voice and empowered those who felt helpless. Gonzales found strength in youth empowerment, and he dedicated his life to helping Hispanic youth in Colorado and the Southwest realize their value in their communities. The legacy of these leaders can be seen today in the many organizations that grew from this movement and which continue to inspire youth and veterans of all backgrounds to develop their talents and skills for a brighter future.

Our Western heritage is richer for the hard fought contributions of Rodolfo Gonzalez, César Chávez and others. These figures drew on their determination and hard work to cultivate a more informed youth and sow the seeds of civil justice in the West. Chávez embodied an unparalleled commitment to millions who worked the land to provide for their families and for a growing country. With his father unable to work, Chávez himself labored in the fields to support his family and provide a better life for them. He worked under poor conditions and earned low wages, facing the same struggles as so many migrant workers. Chávez's story serves as a testament to a community searching for justice. It was his resolute leadership that brought national attention to the unacceptable working conditions and unfair pay faced by farm workers in the West and across America.

Through nonviolent protest, Chávez mobilized and improved the lives of millions, and he is a role model for Coloradans, and all Americans. This March, communities throughout Colorado will once again come together to honor his legacy and the continued fight for justice. Today, I am proud to rise on behalf of Coloradans, to honor those continuing his work and to acknowledge Chávez and the vision cap-

tured in his own uniting words, "We have seen the future, and the future is ours."

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN J. GOOLS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today on behalf of myself and Senator LEVIN to pay tribute to Stephen J. Gools, a tireless champion of causes important to senior citizens and an agent of positive social change throughout his long and distinguished career. Indeed, there are many across Michigan that have benefited greatly from his many efforts over the years.

Since March 2000, Steve has served as director of the AARP Michigan State Office in Lansing, leading a team of 11 staff and serving more than 1.4 million AARP members in the Great Lakes State. Under his leadership, AARP Michigan has been enormously successful in protecting consumers, championing the rights of those over the age of 50 in communities across our State and helping AARP members live their lives to the fullest. His innovative volunteer training and development conferences have served as the gold standard for State management within AARP.

Prior to joining AARP, Steve served as communications director for the Michigan Democratic Party and held senior management positions with Michigan candidates. Steve worked for me as my communications director and played an instrumental role in electing me to Congress. In addition, he worked for the bipartisan Northeast-Midwest Congressional Coalition and the U.S. House Budget Committee Task Force on Community and Natural Resources.

Throughout his professional career, Steve has been a role model and shining example of leadership, intellectual curiosity, courage and determination. He always met his responsibilities with warmth, humor, and infectious enthusiasm.

To honor his work and leadership, AARP has announced the establishment of the Stephen J. Gools Award for Social Change. The annual award will recognize a Michigan individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding achievement in improving the lives of the 50+ population in our State.

It is most fitting that the award will bear the name of a man who has championed the causes of justice, compassion, and equality throughout his life. The award will encourage and recognize those who seek to follow in his footsteps.

We are grateful to him, his wife Kimberly, and his family for the work he has done for the people of Michigan and our country. He has had a lasting impact on the lives of many, and we honor his dedicated service.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN RHYNO

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Madam President, I rise today to recognize John Rhyno of North Attleboro,