

the U.S. Embassy in honor of his contribution to the goal of ending communist repression and commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth. Second, Hungary dedicated the Lantos Institute, named after Tom Lantos, our former colleague from the House of Representatives who worked tirelessly to promote democracy and human rights in the country of his birth. Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Clinton have represented the United States at these respective events.

These gestures shine a light on Hungary's historic transformation as well as the close bonds between our two countries. Unfortunately, other developments in Hungary have cast a dark shadow over what should otherwise be happy occasions.

Last year, Hungary held elections in which a right-of-center party, FIDESZ, won a landslide, sweeping out eight years of socialist government rejected by many voters as scandal ridden and inept. With FIDESZ winning 52 percent of the vote, Hungary has the distinction of being the only country in Central Europe since the 1989 transformations where a single party has won an outright majority—not necessarily a bad thing, especially in a region where many governments are periodically hobbled by factionalism.

Those elections were also notable because more than 850,000 Hungarians—16 percent of the vote—cast their ballots for Jobbik, an anti-Semitic, anti-Roma, irredentist party. While Jobbik is an opposition party, it has clearly and negatively influenced public policy discourse.

Under Hungary's electoral system, FIDESZ's 52 percent of the vote has translated into a two-thirds majority of the seats in parliament. The government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban has used that supermajority to push through one controversial initiative after another.

One initiative that has generated particularly sharp criticism is Hungary's new media law. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media warned it could be used to silence critical media and public debate, it overly concentrates power in regulatory authorities, and it harms media freedom. In Ukraine, where democracy has put down only shallow roots, the Kyiv Post editorialized that "Hungary's media law should not come here."

Another area of concern stems from the government's fixation on ethnic Hungarian identity and lost empire in ways that can only be seen as unfriendly by other countries in the region. One of the government's first acts was to amend Hungary's citizenship law to facilitate the acquisition of Hungarian citizenship by ethnic Hungarians in other countries—primarily Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine. This expansion of citizenship was pushed through even though, in a 2001 statement submitted to the Council of Europe, the Hungarian Govern-

ment firmly renounced all aspirations for dual citizenship for ethnic Hungarians.

In a further escalation of provocative posturing, a few weeks ago Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament Laszlo Kovar said that military force to change the borders with Slovakia—a NATO ally—would have been justified and, in any case, he added, the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia are "ours."

If one side of the nationalism coin is an excessive fixation on Hungarian ethnic identity beyond the borders, the other side is intolerance toward minorities at home. For example, one increasingly hears the argument, including from government officials, that while the Holocaust was a 20th-century tragedy for Jews, the worst tragedy for Hungarians was the 1920 Treaty of Trianon—the treaty that established the borders for the countries emerging from the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire.

This comparison is offensive and disturbing. Ethnic Hungarians were never targeted for extermination or subjected to mass murder by Trianon. Moreover, this line of argument presents Hungarians and Jews as mutually exclusive. But more than 400,000 Jews were sent from Hungary to Auschwitz, and more than 10,000 Jews were shot along the banks of the Danube—were they not also Hungarian? How could this not be a tragedy for Hungary?

The government has also used its supermajority to adopt a completely new Constitution which has been reviewed by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission on Democracy through Law, a body of judicial experts.

The Venice Commission expressed particular concern with the requirement that numerous issues can now only be addressed through supermajority or so-called cardinal laws. In other words, "The more policy issues are transferred beyond the powers of simple majority, the less significance will future elections have and the more possibilities does a two-thirds majority have of cementing its political preferences and the country's legal order."

In short, the Commission concluded, "the principle of democracy itself is at risk."

This combines, by the way, with a court-packing scheme—the expansion of the size of the Constitutional Court from 11 to 15—and a reduction of the retirement age for ordinary judges from 70 to 62, which will reportedly mean 10 percent of all judges will be replaced.

To make exactly clear what he has intended with these reforms, Prime Minister Orban declared that he wants to tie the hands not only of the next government, but of the next 10 governments—that is, future Hungarian governments for the next 40 years.

It is no wonder then that in Freedom House's latest "Nations in Transit" survey, released this week, Hungary had declined in ratings for civil society, independent media, national

democratic governance, and judicial framework and independence.

Ironically, just as attention shifts to the tantalizing possibility of democratic reform in the Middle East, the red flags in Budapest keep multiplying: Transparency International has warned that transferring the power to appoint the Ombudsman from the parliament to the president means that he or she will not be independent of the executive. NGOs have warned that a new draft religion law may result in a number of religions losing their registration. Restrictions by Hungarian authorities on pro-Tibet demonstrations during last week's visit to Budapest of the Chinese Premier were seen as an unnecessary and heavyhanded limitation of a fundamental liberty. Plans to recall soldiers and police from retirement so that they may oversee Romani work battalions have predictably caused alarm.

In 1989, Hungary stood as an inspiration for democracy and human rights advocates around the globe. Today, I am deeply troubled by the trends there. I understand that it sometimes takes new governments time to find their bearings, and I hope that we will see some adjustments in Budapest. But in the meantime, I hope that other countries looking for transformative examples will steer clear of this Hungarian model.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING PETER FALK

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Peter Falk, the iconic actor who entertained generations of Americans throughout an illustrious 50-year acting career. Mr. Falk passed away on June 23, 2011, at his home in Beverly Hills, CA. He was 83 years old.

Peter Falk was born in New York City on September 16, 1927. Despite the loss of his right eye from a surgery to remove a malignant tumor at the age of 3, he became a standout 3-letter athlete, a debate team member and senior class president in high school. It was in high school that he developed a love for acting when he first appeared on stage in a musical.

After graduating from high school, Mr. Falk fulfilled a 1-year commitment as a cook in the Merchant Marines. In 1953, he earned a master's in public administration from Syracuse University and landed a job with the Connecticut State Budget Bureau in Hartford.

While in Hartford, he pursued his love for acting by joining the Mark Twain Maskers, a community theatre group, and learned under the tutelage of actress Eva Le Gallienne at White Barn Theatre. At the age of 28, he quit his job and moved to New York City to become a professional actor.

Mr. Falk first gained acclaim for his portrayal of a bartender in the 1956 Off-Broadway production of "The Iceman

Cometh." Over the next half century, he embarked on a career that included Broadway, television, and movies. He received two Academy Award nominations for best supporting actor for roles in "Murder, Inc." and "Pocketful of Miracles." In 1962, he won the first of five Emmys for a role in "The Dick Powell Show."

Mr. Falk became a household name in 1971 for his title role in the detective series, "Columbo." His portrayal of the iconoclastic Los Angeles Police Department homicide detective made the character one of the most memorable and beloved in television history. Columbo placed 7th in TV Guide's 1999 ranking of "TV's Fifty Greatest Characters Ever."

Mr. Falk's legendary career and his many successes on stage, the small screen and the silver screen highlighted his talents as an actor. A consummate professional, his love for performance and acting brought joy to generations of fans across the world. He will be missed.

I send my deepest sympathies to his family, especially to his wife Shera, and daughters Catherine and Jackie.●

#### REMEMBERING VIRGINIA WAGNER

● Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, our State of Mississippi lost one of its finest citizens when Virginia Wagner of Bay St. Louis died last week.

I ask that the article entitled "Virginia Wagner Left Legacy of Generosity" which was posted by the Sun Herald in Gulfport, MS, be printed in the RECORD.

The article is an excellent tribute to the life and legacy of one of our State's finest citizens.

She and her family are in our thoughts and prayers.

The information follows.

#### VIRGINIA WAGNER LEFT LEGACY OF GENEROSITY

(By Michael Newsom)

Bay St. Louis resident Virginia Wagner—member of a prominent Hancock County family known for good deeds—died Monday. Friends said she left her own legacy of generosity.

Wagner was the daughter of Leo W. Seal Sr. and Rebecca Baxter Seal, and also the younger sister of the late Leo W. Seal Jr., a well known Coast philanthropist, businessman and community leader. Wagner, 81, died Monday morning, a few days after a fall at her home. Her husband, Fred Wagner, said his "extraordinary" wife spent her life helping others.

"She was from a distinguished family who valued public service and helping other people and looking for opportunities to be responsible citizens," he said. "There was a heritage of that in her family. Her brother was very much that way and her mother and father were very much that way. She constantly was interested in and concerned about others. You don't see that kind of philosophy often. A great part of it was her spiritual heritage and her faith. She was a committed Christian."

Fred and Virginia met in the early 1950s when they both lived in New Orleans. A mutual friend introduced them and 57 years after their marriage, Fred Wagner remem-

bered his wife Monday when speaking to the Sun Herald as "absolutely the most wonderful wife any man could ask for" and "a wonderful mother to our children."

Her daughter, Lisa Yearwood, said that even into her 80s, Virginia Wagner kept a social calendar that would rival most people 60 years younger. She kept recent letters from her mother that laid out her entire week's plans that involved meetings, charity work and other engagements. The writings serve as a testament to her tirelessness.

"She was not a typical 81-year-old lady," Yearwood said.

Yearwood said she would remember her mother for the way she treated others—something she tries to mimic.

"She was amazingly welcoming and hospitable," Yearwood said. "That was across the board. Whether that was with a waiter in a restaurant or people in Washington, it didn't matter. She was incredibly loving and welcoming and I hope I picked that up from her."

She kept a busy schedule. In May, Wagner worked a booth at the Bay Bridge Fest selling T-shirts, despite the sweltering temperatures. She was a member of Gulf Coast Blessings, a women's Bible study group. Years ago, Wagner and others began teaching children how to swim and that evolved into a swim team that competed in events across the state. She was also an avid tennis player in the 1950s and 1960s—at a time when her husband said there weren't many others on the Coast playing the sport. She worked as a chaperone for the Miss USA pageant when it was held on the Coast for several years in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Virginia Wagner also organized a Mardi Gras marching club known as "The Marching Fools From Istanbul" and she carried a silver whistle that helped her keep the group in line.

"She was a fun person and she was always in charge," Fred Wagner said.

Friend Carrie Rester said she will remember Virginia Wagner's generosity and "giving heart."

"She loved people and wanted to share that love whether it was with a birthday card, inviting people into her home, delivering a treat she made or checking in by phone or email," Rester said. "She was always thinking about others, going the extra mile for her friends and family."●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1326. A bill to implement the President's request to increase the statutory limit on the public debt.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1324. A bill to amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to prohibit the importation, exportation, transportation, and sale, receipt, acquisition, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce, of any live animal of any prohibited wildlife species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. LANDRIEU:

S. 1325. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating sites in the Lower Mississippi River Area in the State of Louisiana as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 1326. A bill to implement the President's request to increase the statutory limit on the public debt; read the first time.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1327. A bill to amend the Act of March 1, 1933, to transfer certain authority and resources to the Utah Dineh Corporation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 44

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 44, a bill to amend part D of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate covered part D drug prices on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries.

S. 148

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 148, a bill to repeal the provision of law that provides automatic pay adjustments for Members of Congress.

S. 274

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 274, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to medication therapy management services under the Medicare prescription drug program.

S. 556

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 556, a bill to amend the securities laws to establish certain thresholds for shareholder registration, and for other purposes.

S. 672

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 672, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.