

first woman and the first nurse in the Department of Defense to be sworn in as Surgeon General.

Lieutenant General Horoho earned her bachelor of science degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1982. She received her master of science degree as a clinical trauma nurse specialist from the University of Pittsburgh. Her military education includes graduating from the Army's Command and General Staff College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, where she earned a second master of science degree in national resource strategy.

Lieutenant General Horoho has earned numerous civilian and military awards and recognitions throughout her distinguished career. Her civilian accolades include recognition in 1993 as one of the top 100 nurses in the State of North Carolina. She was selected as the USO's Woman of the Year in 2009. Most recently, the University of North Carolina School of Nursing selected her as the Alumna of the Year on November 30, 2011.

Some of Lieutenant General Horoho's previous military assignments include Deputy Surgeon General; Chief of the Army Nurse Corps; Commander of the Western Regional Medical Command in Fort Lewis, WA; Commander of the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA; Commander of the Walter Reed Health Care System in Washington, DC; and Commander of the DeWitt Health Care Network in Fort Belvoir, VA.

Lieutenant General Horoho brings extensive leadership, education, and experience to her new position as the 43rd Army Surgeon General. I applaud the many accomplishments which have brought her to the highest level of rank and responsibility in military medicine, and I wish her success as she begins her new position.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate the National Guard on 375 years of service.

It was on December 13, 1636, in Massachusetts that our Nation's military heritage was born. It was the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony who stood together and founded an organization to protect and defend the peoples of the Bay Colony. They provided watch to ensure the security of their fellow settlers in Massachusetts, and they drilled to ensure they were prepared to fight if called upon.

From these grassroots origins comes today's National Guard: the most prepared, best equipped, and most mobile National Guard our Nation—or any nation—has ever had. Like the guardsmen of the first days of this Nation, today's guardsmen continue to answer the call to duty. They serve as leaders in our homeland defense response and disaster relief, and over the past 10

years, our guardsmen have served with courage and honor in Iraq and Afghanistan, right alongside our Active-Duty Forces. They are fighting on many fronts overseas and fulfilling many different missions.

Sometimes they are coming home with devastating injuries. When they return, these citizen soldiers and airmen face the challenges of recovery, readjustment, and finding jobs. The unemployment rate of today's National Guard remains well above the national average. To ensure that we honor the service of these guardsmen and veterans, I introduced the Hire A Hero Act which gives a tax credit to small businesses that hire veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves, and I am pleased to say that the legislation has become law.

I have also pushed to ensure that all our National Guardsmen receive fair housing allowances. I introduced an amendment included in this year's National Defense Authorization Act that makes certain every guardsman who gets deployed will receive the housing allowance they need and deserve. When a guardsman is ordered to Active Duty for a contingency operation, the housing allowance for that guardsman currently reverts back to his or her home-of-record status rather than the current housing allowance of his or her present duty station, despite any significant loss of income. Basically, guardsmen are being punished financially for being deployed to a war zone. My amendment to this year's National Defense Authorization Act will rectify this inequity.

Also included in this year's National Defense Authorization Act is a monumental provision recognizing the significance of today's National Guard. As a 32-year member of the Massachusetts National Guard and a member of the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees, I am proud to have cosponsored the amendment to make the Chief of the National Guard Bureau a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is a long overdue measure that gives the National Guard the recognition and respect that it deserves. I am proud to have supported it, and I look forward to its final passage.

Today our National Guardsmen continue the tradition of service begun by the militia of 1636, and I want to pay special recognition to the guardsmen of the 26th Yankee Brigade serving overseas and to their families for their service and sacrifice. Massachusetts's own 26th Yankee Brigade is currently serving in Afghanistan. When asked, they answered the call to duty. This summer while I was in Afghanistan, I was fortunate enough to see firsthand the selflessness, courage, and professionalism of "The Nation's First." They are a credit to the State of Massachusetts, the National Guard, and to this Nation.

Congratulations to the National Guard for its 375 years of service to this Nation and to all the guardsmen

who are prepared to support and defend this great Nation in its times of need.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the House Republicans have sent us a payroll tax bill that is more of a political campaign commercial than a piece of serious legislation. Extending this tax break for ordinary Americans evidently has been a tough sell in the other body, unlike the eagerness found there for even more tax relief for the very wealthy. Among the many unrelated, controversial provisions they have attached as sweeteners is one that would force the President to approve the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline. Proponents of this tar sands project provision argue that it belongs on this bill because building the pipeline would create jobs.

Any construction project creates jobs. We could create thousands of jobs by investing in clean solar and wind energy, as the Chinese have done. And people can disagree about building the Keystone Pipeline, but there is a lot more to it than the short-term jobs it would create, and trying to jam it through Congress on this bill in the waning hours of the session is little more than a political stunt.

It was about 15 months ago that I first learned about the plan to build a pipeline to transport crude oil from tar sand strip mines in Alberta across the U.S.-Canada border and down through the Midwestern United States to refineries and ports in Texas.

Tar sands are a particularly dirty source of petroleum, from extraction to refinement. As I looked into this issue I saw some of the photographs of the boreal forest area where it is extracted, and I was shocked. Anyone who is interested in this issue, whether or not you think building the pipeline is a good idea, should look at the photographs. They depict an extraordinarily beautiful landscape that has been ravaged by heavy machinery, vast ponds filled with polluted water and sludge, and a scared wasteland where forests used to be. It is one of the more graphic examples of how our collective, insatiable thirst for oil has pillaged the fragile environment of this planet. Our demand for fossil fuels will continue to grow exponentially unless we come up with a comprehensive, national energy plan and have the will to implement it.

We all know that the extraction of oil, minerals, timber, and other natural resources often harms the environment. But there are degrees of harm. Removing the tops of mountains and dumping the refuse in rivers and ravines or extracting heavy oil from tar sands are among the most energy intensive and destructive.

Under the law, the State Department has the responsibility to approve or disapprove the pipeline because it crosses an international boundary. More than a year ago, I and 10 other Senators sent a letter to the State Department raising concerns about the

proposed pipeline and the impact of tar sands oil on global warming and asking a number of questions about the Department's decisionmaking process. Eight months later we received a response, which answered some of our questions and raised others.

I and other Senators sent two additional letters to the Department about the pipeline, most recently about reports of a possible conflict of interest between the contractor that performed the environmental review, Cardno/Entrix, and the energy company, TransCanada.

There have also been e-mails indicating a less-than-arm's-length relationship between a State Department official at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa and a lobbyist for TransCanada. And a month ago the State Department's inspector general announced the beginning of an investigation into whether conflicts of interest tainted the environmental review process.

What began as basic questions and fundamental concerns about the pipeline has evolved into a significant controversy regarding the impact the pipeline will have upon our Nation's energy policy and continuing dependence on fossil fuels, the irreversible harm to the environment and the acceleration of climate change, and the potential for oilspills that could contaminate a key aquifer underlying an area of critical agricultural importance that hundreds of thousands of midwesterners depend on for irrigation and drinking water.

From the beginning, I have expressed misgivings about the State Department's ability to conduct a thorough, credible investigation of a project of this complexity that involves issues about which it has limited expertise. There are reports of inexperienced staff handling the lion's share of the work, and it is not surprising that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy have raised concerns and identified flaws in the State Department's analysis.

It is my impression that the State Department, from the outset, approached this with a sense of inevitability. What they did not anticipate was the strong reaction of Members of Congress of both parties, including several from Midwestern States that have been coping with multiple oilspills from the original Keystone Pipeline that company officials have treated as inconsequential. They also did not anticipate the strong opposition from ordinary Americans who pay close attention to environmental and energy policy issues, for whom tar sands oil is particularly repugnant.

Concerns about the consequences of this project have united not only those living along the proposed route but people across the Nation, including in Vermont, as well as in Canada, who care about the environment, both in this country and in Canada, and who understand the need to wean our Nation from oil and other fossil fuels and

to invest in renewables and energy efficiency.

Every President since the 1970s has spoken of the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and particularly foreign oil. But despite all the speeches, year after year we are more dependent on these finite, polluting sources of energy than ever before.

Today, energy companies are spending staggering amounts of money in search of new sources of oil and gas in some of the most inhospitable places on Earth, where its extraction involves great risks to the people involved, the environment, and endangered species. We even send our young service men and women halfway around the world to fight wars, in part to ensure our continued access to a ready supply of oil. It has become a national security priority.

We have lost valuable time, and there are no quick fixes. No matter what we do today, later this week, or later this month, this country will be dependent on fossil fuels for many years to come. But simply replacing Middle Eastern oil with Canadian oil without creating new, dependable sources of renewable energy and improving efficiency in the energy we use does not alleviate the national security and economic risks associated with a global oil market that is vulnerable to manipulation and disruption.

There is also much more we could do to make use of what we have by wasting less, improving end-use efficiency, and increasing our use of renewable sources of energy. While TransCanada and its supporters extol the virtues of the Keystone XL Pipeline, as the minority leader and others have done, simply by reducing waste we could eliminate entirely the need for the energy produced from the oil that would flow through the pipeline.

I come from a State that shares a border with Canada. My wife's family is Canadian. I have a great fondness for that "giant to the north." But this issue is not about U.S. relations with Canada. We are inseparable neighbors, friends, and allies. There are strong views about this pipeline, pro and con, in both countries. As Americans, we have to do what is right for our country's energy future, for the environment, for our citizens.

Some have argued that if this pipeline is not built, TransCanada will simply build a pipeline to the coast of British Columbia and export the oil to China. But there are significant obstacles and no indication that such an alternative route is a viable option. Others maintain that the carbon emissions from extracting and refining this oil would not appreciably exceed those from oil shipped by tanker from the Middle East, but they do not address the environmental harm and pollution caused by the strip mining and separation process.

TransCanada has flooded the media with dire warnings about the American jobs that will be lost if the pipeline is

rejected, which our Republican friends have echoed, trying to turn this into a campaign issue. But most of these are construction jobs that will disappear once the pipeline is built. And the choice is not between jobs or no jobs. They do not mention the tens or hundreds of thousands of American jobs that could be created by investing in other cleaner, renewable sources of energy, which, unlike tar sands oil, will not be used up in a few short decades.

Last month, in response to concerns about the sensitive and crucial aquifer that the pipeline would traverse in the Midwest, the White House announced that the State Department will consider alternative routes through Nebraska and that this would delay a decision on the pipeline until 2013. This is positive, but it ignores the many other reasons to reject this project altogether.

It is my hope that on further reflection, the President will treat the debate over the Keystone XL Pipeline as an opportunity to draw a line between our past and future energy policies.

Fossil fuels are finite, inefficient, and dirty. The cost we pay at the gas pump bears no resemblance to the long-term environmental and health costs borne by society as a whole.

We cannot lessen our reliance on fossil fuels by simply talking about it. We cannot do it by putting our goals for a better future under the pillow and leaving any real action to future generations. We cannot do it by hoping that a scientific genius will suddenly discover an unlimited source of energy that costs pennies and does not pollute, nor should we do it by spending huge amounts of money, time, talent and American ingenuity to search the farthest reaches of the globe for every last drop of oil, regardless of how dangerous or harmful to the environment.

Will the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline have the cataclysmic consequences that some of its opponents predict? No one can say for sure. If anyone had asked officials at British Petroleum on April 9, 2010, about the probability of a disaster like the one that occurred the next day when the Deepwater Horizon exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, they likely would have dismissed it as farfetched. It turns out they were violating multiple safety regulations.

Are we going to change the pipeline's route to avoid the aquifer, only to continue to act as if global warming is nothing to worry about, that we can continue to burn more and more fossil fuels, emitting more and more carbon into the atmosphere, and destroying the landscape while we are at it?

This pipeline would perpetuate a costly dependence that has gone on for a century, for which we all share in the blame. Keystone XL would once again do nothing to address the problems associated with fossil fuels. It would virtually assure more oilspills, it would do nothing to promote conservation and reduce waste, and it would do

nothing to spur investment in clean energy alternatives.

Most important, it would provide yet another excuse for once again punting the urgent, national security imperative of developing a sustainable energy policy for this country. That is what the decision about the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline has come to represent regardless of what route it takes.

RECOGNIZING GOLDEN VALLEY, MINNESOTA

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to honor the 125th Anniversary of the incorporation of Golden Valley, MN. As a child growing up in St. Louis Park, I have many fond memories of time spent in my neighboring town to the north, Golden Valley. As next-door neighbors, our cities shared a commitment to civic engagement, strong families, and a tight-knit community that worked for the wellbeing of all its citizens. We can see the results of those values today.

On its 125th birthday, Golden Valley has much to be proud of, a high quality education system, high living standards, and model businesses ranging from Fortune 500 companies to family-owned small businesses. Clearly, Golden Valley is doing something right.

As a representative of the great people of Minnesota, I can see that it's cities like Golden Valley make my State the best place to live in the country. My colleagues here might get tired of hearing how our State consistently does things better, but I will never get tired of telling those stories. Congratulations to the residents of Golden Valley.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING GIL CHAVEZ

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I come before you with a heavy heart to honor the life of Gil Chavez. Mr. Chavez died on November 30, 2011, of injuries sustained in a car accident outside of West High School in Denver, CO. He was 63 years old.

Mr. Chavez was a true community leader in every sense of the word. After graduating from Denver's West High School in 1967, Mr. Chavez spent the next 30 years of his life giving back to the school through teaching, coaching, and counseling. He was always there for his students, so much so that after retiring, he came back to volunteer coach for the wrestling team beside his son, Gil Junior, the current head coach at West. Mr. Chavez's family continues his legacy of always striving for excellence in all that they endeavor.

Gil Chavez was a committed educator and coach who was a role model to the students he worked with. He was a sincere motivator, and he backed up his words with promises that he kept to his students. Mr. Chavez was always

there for those who needed him with an ear to listen, with help figuring out classes or locating a tutor, and always believing in those who needed it most.

To Mr. Chavez'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 Gil's life and by your knowledge that his community will never forget him. His memory will live on in the team, the school, the community, and all those he has touched along the way.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL WILLIAM M. VOIGT

• Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I wish to praise an exceptional man, COL William M. Voigt.

Colonel Voigt has been one of the foremost civil and military leaders in Birmingham and in my State of Alabama for around a half century now. I was proud to join Colonel Voigt recently in Birmingham when he accepted his well-deserved award as the 2011 National Veteran of the Year.

I have had the pleasure to know Bill personally for many years and to observe his devotion to his country. His patriotism is unsurpassed.

Colonel Voigt served his country with 30 years in the Alabama Air National Guard and another 5 years of service with the U.S. Air Force Reserve. He has achieved not only a bachelor of science in business administration from Auburn University and a master's in business administration from the University of Alabama in Birmingham but has also graduated from the Air War College, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, the Air Command and Staff College, and the Squadron Officer School.

In addition to his own education, COL Bill Voigt has given his time and efforts to an impressive and exhaustive list of nonprofits and service organizations. On top of this, he has served for over 20 years as the president of the National Veterans Day organization.

Birmingham is the birthplace of Veterans Day. The very first Veterans Day celebration was held in Birmingham by this very organization in 1947. It was only in 1954, 7 years later, that Congress agreed to the value of this wonderful event and made Veterans Day the national holiday it is today.

The Birmingham National Veterans Day celebration is believed to be not only the oldest but also the largest in the country. The day includes a parade and a large awards dinner. The entire effort is a monumental planning exercise. For 20 years Bill Voigt made it happen.

This year's dinner was a very special one. The organization's president, James A. Holt, Congressman Spencer Bachus, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL, and others took part in the excellent program. I was honored to be a part of the program also. The superb keynote speaker was RADM Tom Stefens (retired), a U.S. Navy SEAL for 34

years. It was a special program indeed, but the remarks all revolved around Colonel Voigt. I know he and his wonderful family were most proud.

Colonel Voigt represents the model for the type of person we should push our youth to emulate. He is a man who has proven time and time again that he is willing to serve his country, his community, and his fellow veterans who have fought for the ideals and goals of the United States of America.

Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute to this great man and by extension this wonderful annual Veterans Day event.●

RECOGNIZING SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

• Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Southcentral Foundation, an Alaska Native-owned, nonprofit health care organization serving nearly 60,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people. Southcentral Foundation received the 2011 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, an award administered by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to honor the country's most innovative organizations. The Baldrige Award is the only formal recognition of the performance excellence of both public and private U.S. organizations given by the President of the United States. Southcentral Foundation is the Alaska's first health care organization to receive this award.

Southcentral Foundation was established in 1982 to improve the health and social conditions of Alaska Native and American Indian people, enhance culture, and empower individuals and families to take charge of their lives. They employ over 1,500 people, of which 53 percent are Alaska Natives or American Indians. As mayor of Anchorage and now as Senator, I watched the growth of this excellent nonprofit from a small outpatient facility to a beautiful, culturally designed campus encompassing many buildings to serve their customer-owners.

Southcentral Foundation's innovative Nuka system of care combines medical, dental, behavioral, and traditional practices and creates relationships that focus on supporting wellness instead of just treating illness. This system has received national and international attention for its successes in health outcomes, operational efficiencies, and customer and employee satisfaction. It is a truly exemplary health care system that is one of the best in the country.

The award will be presented by President Barack Obama in April, 2012.●

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. BILL VANDERWENDE AND MR. DAVE BAKER

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Mr. William "Bill" Vanderwende and Mr. David "Dave" Baker for their leadership, vision and commitment to Delaware's agriculture