

council. But to me, Ray is a model public servant whose commitment to improving the lives of others sets the standard for elected officials.

Not long after graduating from high school, Ray answered the call to serve his country. During the Korean war, he was a soldier with the Army's 40th Infantry Division. An advocate for veterans, he remains a proud member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In 1958, Ray's career brought him to his adopted hometown of Manchester. Six years later, he founded the insurance agency that bears his name—now a second generation family business carried on by his sons.

It didn't take long for Ray to realize that a city is only as strong as its citizenry. He once said that the heart and soul of any community is formed by the people who are willing to give their heart and soul to their community. And that is exactly what Ray has done.

To say that he has given generously of his time and expertise over the past several decades would be an understatement. Ray served as a trustee of the Manchester Boys and Girls Club; director and president of the Manchester Scholarship Foundation; chairman of the Greater Manchester United Way Board of Directors; and as commissioner, and later chairman, of the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

In 1989, Ray was elected to his first of five terms as the mayor of Manchester—New Hampshire's largest city. In the midst of an economic downturn, the Queen City faced significant challenges. A once bustling mill town, the city was struggling to reinvent itself. Ray's enormous energy, vision, and optimism made him a perfect fit for the mayor's office—and at just the right time.

While others may have had doubts about the city's future, Ray thought big. To help drive economic activity, he successfully pushed for the approval of a civic center. Today, visitors from across New Hampshire descend on the Verizon Wireless arena—located in the well-named “Raymond J. Wiecezorek Square”—for sporting events and concerts. This facility has literally changed the face of Manchester, enlivening downtown and proving that the Queen City is open for business.

Under Ray's leadership, Manchester made a major comeback. The city's iconic Millyard started to flourish once again. The groundwork was laid for a now-thriving Manchester Airport, which today serves as the gateway to northern New England and Boston's northern suburbs. Fittingly enough, the access road to the airport is named in Ray's honor. Also during his mayoralty, a new city charter was adopted. The FIRST program got underway, and city hall was renovated and restored; it is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ray once said, “I wasn't born in this city. I'm here [be]cause I want to be

here.” His efforts to improve Manchester were driven by an unwavering devotion to the city he loves. The turnaround Ray led was confirmed in 1998, when Money magazine named Manchester as the Number One Small City in the East.

And after nearly a decade of service as mayor, Ray was honored by the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce as the 1999 Citizen of the Year.

It would have been understandable for Ray to enjoy a quiet retirement. Fortunately for the people of New Hampshire, he instead chose to bring his wisdom to the statehouse in Concord.

Serving with Ray in State government, I had a firsthand opportunity to see his strong commitment to fighting for his constituents. And as New Hampshire has faced challenges during a difficult economic period, there is no question that Ray's experience as a successful mayor and businessman has contributed conspicuously to the work of the executive council. Just as he helped Manchester navigate a challenging chapter in its history, Ray has provided steady and strong leadership at a critical time for our State. Having served on the council for a decade, Ray's voice will be sorely missed after his retirement.

Today, in the Senate, I am honored to recognize Ray Wiecezorek for his tireless work to improve the lives of Manchester residents and citizens from across New Hampshire. I am grateful for his leadership, for his good humor, and most of all for his kind friendship. By raising the bar for excellence in public service, Ray Wiecezorek has earned his rightful place as one of New Hampshire's great statesmen.●

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

● Mr. CARDIN. President Theodore Roosevelt established Pelican Island in Florida as the first national wildlife refuge on March 14, 1903. He was responding not only to an urgent need to conserve our vulnerable natural resources but also to the passionate advocacy of Americans who understood that our Nation's strength lies in the conservation of our wild lands and unique species.

Over the course of his Presidency, Roosevelt established 53 wildlife refuges, from Key West's mangrove islands and sand flats to Flattery Rock along Washington State's coast.

Today, on the refuge system's 109th birthday, the National Wildlife Refuge spans more than 150 million acres, across 556 wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts. The National Wildlife Refuge System is the Nation's premier network of public lands dedicated to the conservation of America's land and waters, its fish, wildlife, and plants.

From the Arctic to the Caribbean, the Atlantic to the Pacific, America's wildlife refuges are in every State and

U.S. territory. Wildlife refuges conserve habitat that is essential to more than 700 species of birds, 220 types of mammals, 250 varieties of reptiles and amphibians, more than 1,000 species of fish, and uncounted invertebrates and plants. They sustain nearly 300 of the Nation's more than 1,300 endangered or threatened species.

The National Wildlife Refuge System does not only benefit wildlife. The refuges also play a critical role for our communities. By protecting wetlands, grasslands, forests, wilderness, and other natural habitats, wildlife refuges improve air and water quality, relieve flooding, improve soil quality, and trap greenhouse gases. Wildlife refuges also benefit local economies, drawing visitors to local communities and supporting jobs tied to conservation and outdoor recreation.

I am especially proud of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in my home State of Maryland. Blackwater contains roughly one-third of all of the tidal wetlands in the State of Maryland and provides critical storm protection to lower Dorchester County, MD. Home to one of the largest breeding populations of American bald eagles on the east coast, Blackwater Refuge is recognized as a “Wetlands of International Importance” by the Ramsar Convention and has been called one of the “Last Great Places” by the Nature Conservancy. Blackwater also plays a critical economic role in Maryland, attracting approximately 200,000 visitors annually and providing an important economic engine for our Eastern Shore communities.

The Blackwater Refuge is a place of great ecological and economic value, but more than that, it is a place of deep historic value. One of the most important heroes in our Nation's history lived and bravely worked within the boundaries of Blackwater. To commemorate this history, I have introduced legislation to create two national historical parks—one within the Blackwater Refuge and one in New York to honor the legacy of Harriet Ross Tubman for her work on the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was born within the Blackwater boundary and conducted much of her courageous work there leading other slaves northward to freedom. I am deeply committed to ensuring that her legacy is celebrated within the Blackwater Refuge. This is part of the beauty of the National Wildlife Refuge System: by preserving the ecological integrity of our treasured lands, we also preserve an important link to our Nation's past.

In an increasingly urban and high-speed world, our national wildlife refuges— islands of natural beauty—offer Americans priceless places to soothe or stir the soul, educate the mind, and invigorate the body. I am pleased today to recognize the anniversary of this valuable system.●

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2191. A bill to amend the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to prohibit the Attorney General from administering or enforcing certain accessibility regulations relating to pools at public accommodations or provided by public entities.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-5352. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2011-0916)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5353. A communication from the Senior Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes" ((RIN2120-AA64) (Docket No. FAA-2011-0918)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5354. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program" (RIN0596-AC84) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2012; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5355. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department's renitification of the intent to obligate up to \$30 million in funds for the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5356. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserves Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Guard Youth Challenge Program 2011 annual report; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5357. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of the national emergency with respect to Iran declared in Executive Order 12957; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5358. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Somalia that was declared in Executive Order 13536 of April 12, 2010; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5359. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Private Transfer Fees" (RIN2590-AA41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 13, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5360. A communication from the Director of Insular Affairs, Office of the Sec-

retary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress on the Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5361. A communication from the Director of Insular Affairs, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "First Five-Year Review of the Compact of Free Association, As Amended, Between the Governments of the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5362. A communication from the Director of Insular Affairs, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "First Five-Year Review of the Compact of Free Association, As Amended, Between the Governments of the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5363. A communication from the Deputy Chief of the National Forest System, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the detailed boundary for the Presque Isle Wild and Scenic River in Michigan to be added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5364. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a semiannual report detailing telecommunications-related payments made to Cuba pursuant to Department of the Treasury licenses; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5365. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of an item not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5366. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for permanent export of defense articles, including, technical data, or defense services sold commercially under contract for use by the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service Iraq Special Forces for military purposes in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5367. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Rising to the Challenge: A New Era in Victim Services"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5368. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Annual Report to Congress for the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance for fiscal year 2010; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5369. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to Food and Drug Administration Advisory Committee Vacancies and Public Disclosures; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5370. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to Federal sector equal employment

opportunity complaints filed with the Office during fiscal year 2011; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5371. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Uninformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) Quarterly Report to Congress: First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2012"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-5372. A communication from the Acting Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "National Airspace System Capital Investment Plan Fiscal Years 2013-2017"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5373. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act" (MB Docket No. 11-93; FCC 11-182) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 29, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5374. A communication from the Deputy Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Connect America Fund; A National Broadband Plan for Our Future; Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, . . . Universal Service Reform—Mobility Fund" ((RIN3060-AF85) (DA-12-147)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5375. A communication from the Deputy Bureau Chief, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization; Lifeline and Link Up; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; Advancing Broadband Availability Through Digital Literacy Training" ((RIN3060-AF85) (FCC 12-11)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-5376. A communication from the Associate Bureau Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of the Commercial Spectrum Enhancement Act and Modernization of the Commission's Competitive Bidding Rules and Procedures" (WT Docket No. 05-211; FCC 12-12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 2, 2012; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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 Mr. PRYOR:

S. 2192. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of optometrists in the National Health Service Corps scholarship and loan repayment programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. KOHL):