

expand the availability of special U-visas for undocumented immigrants who are victims of domestic violence. That move was supported by law enforcement to encourage victims to come forward and testify against their abusers.

The regressive House alternative removes these and other improvements, including new protections for students on college campuses. The House measure would eliminate a confidentiality requirement in current law that protects the identity of immigrant women who file domestic violence complaints against a spouse who is a citizen or legal resident and allows the women to apply for legal status on their own.

House Republicans claim there is a big fraud problem in this area, but there is no hard evidence of that. And their plan to end the centralized handling of these issues by a Vermont-based office would undermine the government's ability to detect untruthful stories.

House members on both sides of the aisle who are serious about combating domestic violence must work to defeat this atrocious bill. If that fails, the Senate will need to insist on fixing it during the reconciliation process.

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PARTISANSHIP AND THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The House needs to reauthorize the law, without limits, as it has in the past, so Republicans can demonstrate that helping battered women is more important than political games.

The political climate in Congress is so noxious these days that even a law that originally passed with overwhelming bipartisan support because it provided much-needed help to abused women is now a partisan issue. That's shameful. Republicans in the House should drop their attempts to undermine the Violence Against Women Act and instead move swiftly to reauthorize and strengthen the existing program, as the Senate has already done.

First enacted in 1994, the law has been renewed twice without a fight. Last week, however, some of the same GOP lawmakers who once endorsed the law retreated, voting in committee to strip out provisions designed to protect immigrants. Under VAWA as it has long existed, if an immigrant married to a U.S. citizen or a green-card holder—and therefore eligible to stay in the country permanently—can show evidence of abuse, he or she may file independently without having to rely on the abusive spouse. VAWA's gender-neutral protections apply to legal and illegal immigrants and allow the victim to file confidentially.

Confidentiality is crucial. As the Republican-led House Judiciary Committee noted in its 2005 report to reauthorize VAWA and expand protections, without such guarantees, an abuser could try to derail a spouse's green-card application or push to have him or her deported. A battered woman whose application depends on her abusive husband certainly might think twice about filing if she knew her abuser would be notified that she was seeking help without him.

Eliminating the confidentiality provision is one of several changes House Republicans would like to make to weaken the law. They argue that the changes are necessary to combat fraud, in which immigrants falsely claim to have been abused in order to obtain visas. But where are the data and studies that fraud is a problem? Immigrant victims who petition for visas under VAWA are already required to supply ample evidence of abuse, such as police reports or medical records. And applications undergo intense scrutiny.

In fiscal 2011, immigration officials denied nearly a third of those petitions.

The House reauthorization bill also seeks to undercut a provision that allows undocumented immigrants who assist in prosecutions of serious crime for U visas, and ultimately obtain green cards. The proposed changes would allow victims to obtain temporary visas only. Surely, even those lawmakers who embrace anti-immigrant legislation can appreciate that U visas help protect American citizens too, by encouraging witnesses to step forward without fear of deportation. That's why the program enjoys the backing of many law enforcement groups.

The House will vote on Wednesday. It should reauthorize VAWA without limits, as it has in the past, and demonstrate that helping battered women, those who are immigrants, isn't a partisan issue.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I rise to highlight for my colleagues how Congress now has a critical opportunity to support the competitiveness and prosperity of American agriculture. We need to move the farm bill forward. It is fitting that this week marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Federal Department solely dedicated to meeting the needs of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

Agriculture is at the heart of Colorado's history and cultural fabric. It also continues to be one of our most significant economic drivers. At a time when many sectors are struggling to find growth, Colorado farmers and ranchers are more productive than ever, finding innovative ways to harness growing consumer demand for agricultural products both at home and in overseas markets.

As evidence of this success, agriculture is the one sector of the U.S. economy that boasts a trade surplus. During the first 2 months of 2012, Colorado exports of agricultural products grew by 25 percent over the same period in 2011, led by an 80-percent increase in dairy exports. This good news comes on the heels of several consecutive years of double-digit increases in Colorado agriculture exports.

The USDA is part of this success story. Colorado farmers and ranchers work closely with local USDA employees to support the productivity of their operations and to maintain the health of their land and water resources. It is a vital partnership. And with expiration looming on many programs important to Colorado agriculture, I can think of no better way to commemorate the USDA's 150th anniversary than by reauthorizing the farm bill.

Over the last several months, the Senate and House committees on agriculture have come together to craft a bipartisan farm bill that not only provides America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities with the tools they need to keep growing but also makes a significant contribution toward important national deficit reduction goals. The farm bill passed by the Senate Ag-

riculture Committee makes very significant progress in simplification, accountability, and taxpayer savings.

Using feedback I received from over 20 listening sessions statewide, I worked to secure Colorado's top farm bill priorities. In particular, I am encouraged by the farm bill's revamped conservation title. It maintains vital authorities for land and water protection while also consolidating over 20 existing conservation programs to provide producers and landowners with much needed flexibility.

I also strongly support efforts by the Senate Agriculture Committee to strengthen the Federal crop insurance program. Time and time again, Colorado farmers have told me that affordable crop insurance is the single most important risk management tool the USDA can provide to producers for addressing today's economic and ecological challenges.

According to Colorado State University, agriculture contributes \$40 billion toward the State economy annually. Of course, the benefits of a strong farm economy extend far beyond the farm. It means stronger energy, transportation, and retail sectors. It also allows us to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable populations at home and in countries suffering from famine due to drought and conflict.

In short, reauthorizing the farm bill is one the most important things this Congress can do to provide farmers and ranchers with the certainty they need to plan for the future. It will help to keep rural America growing and thriving, and it will help to invigorate an economy just now getting back on its feet. Acting on this legislation during USDA's 150th year would make the accomplishment even better.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO FATHER RICHARD J. KELLEY

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor my friend, Father Richard J. Kelley, a Catholic priest who has devoted decades of service in parishes across New Hampshire. It is my privilege to congratulate him as he celebrates his 40th anniversary of ordination to priesthood.

Father Kelley was born in Boston, MA, on May 10, 1943. He was raised in Needham and West Roxbury and graduated from Catholic Memorial High School in 1961. His seminary studies took place at the Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT, and Catholic University in Washington, DC.

In addition to his commitment to the Catholic Church, Father Kelley has always reached out to help those in need. Before his ordination to priesthood, he spent time performing inner-city social work in Kansas City, MO. Shortly thereafter, Father Kelley was ordained to priesthood on May 20, 1972, at the St. Joseph Cathedral in Manchester, NH.

Since offering his first Mass at St. Joseph Church in his hometown of Needham, Father Kelley has spent many years serving parish churches in cities and towns across New Hampshire. As an associate pastor, he led Seacoast parishioners at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Hampton and St. Michael Parish in Exeter. He also served at St. Joseph Cathedral in Manchester.

On October 7, 1985, Father Kelley was appointed to his first pastorate at St. Catherine Parish in Charlestown, followed by over a decade of service at St. Patrick Parish in Jaffrey. So many New Hampshire parishes have been blessed to have Father Kelley's guidance, and his message of faith and devotion has touched many lives.

Since 2000, Father Kelley has served as the Pastor of St. Christopher Parish in my hometown of Nashua. In addition to his role as leader of the parish, Father Kelley is also a familiar face to the students at St. Christopher's Catholic School, where his patience, kindness, and humility serve as an inspiring example.

The impact of Father Kelley's 40 years of service can perhaps best be witnessed every Christmas. He receives hundreds of holiday cards from parishioners and friends he has met throughout his lifetime. He hangs up each one to decorate the walls and doors of his office, completely covering each surface and eventually spilling into the hallways. This seasonal collage reflects the many valued friendships he has cultivated throughout his career.

Father Kelley's impact continues to reach far beyond the parish walls. In addition to his responsibilities at St. Christopher's, he has assisted other community members through his service as the Nashua Police Department chaplain, as a former board member of Harbor Homes, and through his continued support of Catholic Memorial High School.

I am honored to recognize Father Richard Kelley as his many friends help him mark his 40th anniversary of ordination to priesthood. His loyalty and dedication to the Catholic Church and to his parishioners is unwavering—St. Christopher's is blessed and fortunate to have his guidance. I am grateful for Father Kelley's leadership and his many years of service to the Catholic Church in communities across New Hampshire.●

REMEMBERING JUDGE ROBERT E. COYLE

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Judge Robert E. Coyle, a talented jurist, a respected member of the community, and a kind and gentle man. Judge Coyle passed away on May 7 in Fresno at age 82.

A Fresno native, Robert Coyle received his B.A. from Fresno State College in 1953 and his J.D. from the University of California, Hastings College

of the Law in 1956. After law school, he began his legal career as a deputy district attorney in Fresno County before working as an associate at Hansen, McCormick, Barstow and Sheppard from 1958 to 1961 and as partner at McCormick, Barstow, Sheppard, Coyle and Wayte from 1961 to 1982.

Judge Coyle was nominated to the Eastern District bench by President Reagan, confirmed by the Senate on March 31, 1982, and served as chief judge of the district from 1990 to 1996, when he took senior status and continued to take cases until 2006.

Judge Coyle played an instrumental role in the construction of new Federal courthouses in Sacramento and Fresno. For 13 years, he led the effort to build the Fresno courthouse, often seen shuttling from his chambers to the construction site with his hard hat in hand. His passion for this project once prompted him to ride in a suspended platform to some 300 feet above the ground to get a glimpse of the view that is now enjoyed by the building's occupants and visitors. After taking in the views of his beloved hometown and the breathtaking Sierra and beautiful Coastal Range, Judge Coyle compared his experience to "riding on a cloud."

I am proud to have introduced legislation that led to the naming of the Federal courthouse in downtown Fresno as the Robert E. Coyle United States Courthouse. The nine-story building stands as a reminder to the community and people of California of the dedicated work of Judge Robert E. Coyle.

Judge Coyle was always admired for his sharp intellect, collegiality, and gentlemanly ways. A giving person, he lent his time and talents to a number of community causes, including service on the board of trustees of the United Way Advocate. In his leisure time, he enjoyed spending time at the family cabin above Bass Lake.

I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife of 59 years, Faye; his son and daughter-in-law, Robert and Kim; and his daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Michael Vellone; and his grandchildren, Hunter, Sydney, Morgan, and Matthew.

Judge Coyle will be greatly missed.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. THEODORA KALIKOW

● Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on April 23, 2012, Dr. Theodora J. Kalikow gave her last lecture as president of the University of Maine Farmington and received a standing ovation from an overflow audience at the campus's largest auditorium. In that same spirit, I rise today to express my gratitude to a great leader and good friend for 18 years of outstanding service to the people of Maine.

There are many ways to describe what Theo as she is known to colleagues, students, and friends has meant to our State. One is to note that in 1998, her fourth year as president,

the University of Maine Farmington was named to U.S. News and World Report's best college list for the first time. This year, UMF celebrated 15 consecutive years of receiving that hard-earned and well-deserved recognition.

Another way is to consider the deep affection alumni and people throughout Maine have for this remarkable institution. As just one example, in 2007 UMF opened its new Education Center that integrates technology with teaching and learning. This major expansion was made possible only through the generosity of countless individuals, businesses, and organizations. Over the years, this kind of overwhelming support has enabled this small school of just 2,000 students to keep pace with the top colleges and universities in the country.

Responding to the needs of an ever-changing society is one of the richest traditions a college can have. The traditions Dr. Kalikow has upheld began a century and a half ago when the people of rural Franklin County joined together to establish Maine's first public institution of higher education. When the first class of 31 students matriculated at the new Farmington Normal School in 1864, they did so in a setting that was described by a University of Maine historian as "rough, crude, and plenty humble."

Under Dr. Kalikow's leadership, UMF has upheld another noble tradition that of contributing to the entire region by adding to its cultural life, teaching in local classrooms, coaching youth athletics, and helping youngsters learn everything from swimming to foreign languages. From the Health and Fitness Center to the Mantor Library, the doors of UMF are open to the community.

In her last lecture, Dr. Kalikow drew a strong connection between the America we know today as a place of unsurpassed equality, freedom, and opportunity and the "rough, crude, and plenty humble" foundation of public higher education laid in Farmington, ME, and other frontier communities across the Nation so many generations ago. These ordinary citizens knew that education was a necessary condition of creating a successful society, she said, and we today are the beneficiaries of their investment.

Mr. President, Dr. Theo Kalikow has increased that investment through an ongoing commitment to teaching and learning. On behalf of the people of Maine, I thank Dr. Kalikow for her contributions to our State and wish her all the best in the years to come.●

CONGRATULATING ANGELA FOREMASTER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate a student from my home State for being recognized as one of Nevada's top youth volunteers of 2012. Angela Foremaster, a senior at Legacy High School in Las Vegas, was