

have worked in their states to bring awareness to the issue, changes in policy and coordination in efforts to prevent childhood drinking. As an example of extensive grassroots activity in underage drinking, more than 2,000 grassroots events were held in 2010 to focus on underage drinking.

The combined national initiatives, state focus, and grassroots activities have contributed to a significant decline in underage drinking in the United States as discussed on page 1-2 of this document. In 1991 when the first Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (YRBS) survey was administered, 50.8% of youth in grades 9-12 reported current alcohol use, or use with 30 days prior to the survey. The latest survey results in 2009 showed that number had dropped to 41.8%, a statistically significant drop with a p-value of 0.00. That statistical difference means that youth in 1991 were more likely than youth in 2009 to be current drinkers. The number of states and territories participating in YRBS survey data collection was fifty-three (53) in 2009; thirty-six (36) were states in which there was a First Spouse member of the Leadership Foundation. When looking at the data from those specific states, all states showed a marked decline in current alcohol with an average decline of 9.4%. Ten out of the 36 showed a statistically significant decline in current youth alcohol users. The front-runners in decline were New Mexico, Rhode Island and North Dakota, and Utah showed the lowest rate of current alcohol use among all states in 1991 and 2009 (26.6 to 18.2).

Despite significant headway in the prevention of underage drinking, current levels are still too high. Researchers continue to document the importance of protecting the development of the adolescent brain from the toxic effect of alcohol. Adolescent alcohol use contributes to a host of social, emotional, legal, academic, and physical consequences. Children who begin using alcohol before age 15 are more likely to develop a full-blown addiction and a lifetime of lost productivity from it. The country's attention to it must be continued and expanded.

Therefore, the Leadership Foundation has launched a 2012 initiative to create "virtual statewide coalitions" with support from NABCA (National Alcohol Beverage Control Board Association). The website, with the First Spouse as the convener, provides a place for all the coalitions in a state to register along with vital, relevant state departments, and agencies as well as relevant alcohol reduction and youth serving agencies. The purpose of this initiative is to facilitate more effective conversations between state and local efforts to prevent underage drinking, and to distribute timely alerts from national agencies to state and local groups.

Mr. President, I hereby offer these aforementioned accomplishments of The Leadership To Keep Children Alcohol Free Foundation, and in so doing, seek to commemorate for posterity their important work and highlight the value of protecting our nation's children from the dangers of underage drinking.●

TRIBUTE TO LOUIE A. WRIGHT

● Mrs. MCCASKILL Mr. President, today I wish to honor the work of Louie A. Wright. In our great Nation, there are labor leaders and then there are exceptional labor leaders. Louie Wright is one of those exceptional labor leaders.

Louie recently retired as the head of the International Association of Firefighters Local 42 in Kansas City, but

Louie will never stop working and fighting for working men and women of Missouri and, for that matter, the Nation.

Louie is exceptional for many reasons, not the least of which are his intellect, his professionalism, and his ability to work with, not against, management to the benefit of his membership.

I have known Louie for over 30 years. I have watched him under pressure. I have watched him succeed. I have watched him stumble from time to time. But through it all he remained steadfast and loyal to his friends and willing to do anything for his fellow firefighters.

Louie grew up in Kansas City and, as a young man, became a firefighter for the city of Kansas City, MO, Fire Department. It was a full-time job, but for Louie full-time is 24 hours-a-day, so in 1988 he entered law school at the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

He received a law degree and was admitted to the Missouri, Kansas, Colorado and Federal bar. Louie also clerked in the U.S. District Court in the Western District of Missouri, and he accomplished all of this while serving the people of Kansas City as one of their most dedicated firefighters.

Having a labor leader with a law degree is a powerful force when negotiating labor contracts, and the men and women of the city's fire department recognized that, electing Louie president of IAFF Local 42 in 1995.

What also set Louie apart was his understanding that for firefighters to expect decent wages and benefits, the department had to demand that it become a first-rate firefighting and fire prevention force. And today Kansas City has one of the best and most well-respected fire departments in the Nation.

Louie did not just care about his firefighters, but he cared for all the working men and women of Kansas City and was and remains a member of the executive committee of the Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO. In addition, one of his true passions is health care and its delivery to all Kansas Citizens. Louie spent untold volunteer hours on the board of the Truman Medical Center and the Mid-America Health Coalition.

In conclusion, we honor him today as an exceptional labor leader. Upon Louie's retirement, IAFF Local 42 lost an amazing president. However, Kansas City has not lost one of its finest advocates for the working men and women. Thankfully, his work will continue. I treasure his friendship and am proud to recognize his immense contributions.●

RURAL HEALTH EDUCATION NETWORK

● Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 20th anniversary of a successful program in my home State of Nebraska called the Rural Health Education Network, or RHEN which focuses on increasing the health workforce.

The RHEN program was established at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, UNMC, as an effort to develop a network of volunteer faculty in communities across the State who would serve as mentors for students entering into various health care professions to perform rural rotations as part of their training. This partnership between UNMC and these Nebraska communities provides hands-on training for these health profession students.

Working with volunteer faculty across rural Nebraska communities, almost all UNMC students are able to complete a rural rotation during their education. Students spend up to 2 months living and working in a rural community under the guidance of a local health professional. In 2010, more than 530 students from UNMC participated in 854 rural rotations in 74 Nebraska communities. The program allows these UNMC students to experience the good life in Nebraska communities, inspiring many students to launch a health career in a smaller community.

The RHEN program has since expanded to promote career opportunities in health care to students in rural areas and smaller communities. In fact, RHEN has become the umbrella under which most of UNMC's rural outreach education activities are accomplished.

One goal of RHEN has been to create innovative programs at the undergraduate level and establish a career pipeline for students from rural areas to become health care professionals in rural Nebraska. A key component in attaining this goal was the establishment of the Rural Health Opportunities Program, or RHOP.

Built on the logic that persons raised in rural areas are more likely to return to rural areas after school, RHOP gives youth from rural areas a head start in pursuing a health care career. Under RHOP, qualified high school graduates receive tentative acceptance into one of nine UNMC health profession programs when they begin undergraduate studies at either Chadron State or Wayne State College in Nebraska. The undergraduate tuition is waived for these students, provided they meet all applicable academic standards.

The RHOP program provides students a career path to nearly every health care field, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, dental hygiene, physical therapy, physician assistant, radiography, and clinical laboratory science. Since its inception,

Seventy-five percent of all practicing UNMC RHOP graduates have worked in a rural community for at least part of their careers;

Currently, 183 out of 359 practicing RHOP graduates are health care providers in rural Nebraska;

Two hundred fifty-three RHOP alumni are practicing in 57 Nebraska counties; and

Seventy percent of RHOP graduates stay in Nebraska.

Based on RHOP's initial success, UNMC has since developed three additional early admission programs:

The Kearney Health Opportunities Program grants students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, UNK, pre-admission to UNMC in five programs including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, radiography, and clinical laboratory science.

A collaboration between Peru State College and the UNMC College of Pharmacy reserves three slots each year in the College of Pharmacy for Peru State graduates.

The Public Health Early Admission Student Track allows Chadron State, Wayne State, Peru State, and UNK to each annually select three students for direct enrollment into a UNMC Public Health graduate program to help relieve the critical shortage of public health workers in rural Nebraska.

Additionally, since 1993, UNMC has sponsored annual science meets for eighth graders in Nebraska communities to get students interested in science-based careers. More than 1,000 students have participated in these meets. Further, RHEN hosts a career day each year for more than 250 students to visit and experience UNMC.

Now recognized as one of the most effective health workforce development programs in my state, RHEN's anniversary provides the perfect opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of this amazing program and how it is making a difference across Nebraska. To illustrate, RHEN's focus is one of the reasons why U.S. News & World Report ranks UNMC's primary care medicine program among the top 10 in the country.

In closing, the Rural Health Education Network program has made a significant difference in helping students become health care professionals for rural Nebraska, and I extend my congratulations to this program on 20 years of making a positive impact and increasing the health care workforce across Nebraska.●

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

● Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, throughout the month of May, we celebrate Jewish Heritage Month, a time to reflect upon and celebrate those who have helped shape Jewish culture and the shared American experience. Since arriving on the shores of New Amsterdam in 1654, the men and women of the Jewish faith have worked to promote opportunity, justice, and equality for all.

In communities across the United States, public service, social action, and charity are rooted in both the religious and cultural components of Judaism.

Every day, members of Ohio's Jewish community make contributions that better the lives of their families, friends, and cities. While so many of these men and women deserve our praise and gratitude, I would like to

highlight a few leaders within the Ohio Jewish community both past and present.

Dr. Albert Sabin, a pioneer in the field of medicine, called Cincinnati, OH home. While a professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Dr. Sabin developed and perfected the oral polio vaccine. In 1960, after extensive preliminary trials, Dr. Sabin's oral polio vaccine was first used in Europe.

Between the years of 1962 and 1964, nearly 100 million people—children and adults—benefited from this vaccine in the United States. Dr. Sabin's contributions to the field of medical research saved countless lives from the ravages of polio and in the process, shaped modern vaccine study. It is no exaggeration to say that his efforts bettered and saved the lives of millions worldwide.

The success of Dr. Sabin clearly reflects Jewish values a commitment to social justice and a desire to work towards bettering society.

Such values are also extremely evident in the work of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. Born in Poland in 1907 and deported by the Nazi's in 1938, he was rescued and brought to the United States by Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College. Both an activist and religious leader, Rabbi Heschel played a powerful role in forging the bonds of faith, social action, and civil rights. In 1965, Rabbi Heschel marched arm-in-arm with Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma in support of the civil rights movement. Following this experience, he spoke the iconic words: "I felt my feet were praying."

Just 3 years later, on March 25, 1968—10 days before that fateful day in Memphis, TN—Rabbi Heschel introduced Dr. King to the 68th Annual Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly. Rabbi Heschel closed his introduction by saying, "The situation of the poor in America is our plight, our sickness. To be deaf to their cry is to condemn ourselves."

Dr. King began his opening statement by saying, "I have heard 'We Shall Overcome' probably more than I have heard any other song over the last few years. It is something of the theme song for our struggle. But tonight was the first time that I ever heard it in Hebrew, what a beautiful experience for me."

Rabbi Heschel's legacy is carried on by his daughter, Dr. Susannah Heschel, a professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth College. I was proud to join Dr. Heschel at a series of events we conducted in Ohio to celebrate her father's legacy and to discuss the future of social action and civil rights.

Another resident of Ohio who had a tremendous impact on Jewish heritage is Samuel Melton. Born in Austria-Hungary in 1900, Melton was just 4 years old when he and his mother joined his father in Toledo, OH.

As a student at the Ohio State University, Mr. Melton first became interested in reforming how Judaism was

studied. While his career path led him away from Judaism and into the production of stainless steel fittings, his passion for Jewish education remained.

After Mr. Melton's retirement from Capitol Manufacturing and Supply of Columbus in 1959, he devoted his time and financial resources to modernizing and reforming Jewish education. He established the Melton Fellowship to encourage talented men and women to pursue work in Jewish education and financed the Samuel M. Melton Center for Jewish Studies at the Ohio State University, the first center for Jewish Studies at an American public university. Additionally, Mr. Melton's impact on Jewish heritage spans the globe through his entrepreneurial and philanthropic involvement in Israel.

Some have said that Mr. Melton spent the first half of his life earning his fortune and the second half giving it away. I commend Mr. Melton for this generosity. His passion for Judaism has impacted thousands of young Jewish men and women in Ohio and across the world.

Finally, I would like to highlight Alfred Tibor, a current Columbus resident, who was born in Hungary in 1920. Mr. Tibor has used his experiences as a Holocaust survivor to create sculptures that not only commemorate but also inspire humanity.

In his youth, Mr. Tibor was a talented gymnast and acrobat, but his Jewish heritage kept him from competing in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. In 1940, he was forced by the Germans to perform slave labor before being sent to a prisoner of war camp in Siberia. After the war, Alfred and his brother returned to Hungary to find that they were the only members of their family to escape the war. Fearing further anti-Semitic activities, he fled Hungary, arriving in the United States and settling in Columbus.

For more than half a century, Alfred Tibor has used his talents to inspire and educate. According to Mr. Tibor, "Art for art's sake is not enough." His sculptures are seen across the world as tributes to those lost and as reminders of hope and faith in times of tragedy and unspeakable horror.

During Jewish Heritage Month, let's honor Dr. Sabin, Rabbi Heschel, Mr. Melton, and Mr. Tibor, as well as all the men and women within the Ohio Jewish community who are seeking to better their neighborhoods while working to advance social justice. Thank you for your service to the Nation.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, 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