

taxes, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation—over half of Americans. And these citizens take much more than their fellow citizens in government benefits.

Look at food stamps, for example. As my friend Senator SESSIONS has pointed out, “food stamp spending has quadrupled since 2001. It has doubled just since 2008. A program that began as a benefit for 1 in 50 Americans is now received by 1 in 7.” Spending on food stamp welfare has increased 100 percent since President Obama took office. Some 80 percent of all spending in the recently passed farm bill will go toward food stamps.

In total, there are 69 means-tested Federal welfare programs costing taxpayers \$940 billion every year, including both Federal programs and State contributions to those programs. The number of Americans living off the wealth of “makers” keeps growing and growing. There are nearly twice as many government workers today as there are in the manufacturing sector, meaning that there are more government workers than people making products and paying their salaries. Is that fair?

As economist Stephen Moore noted, “This is an almost exact reversal of the situation in 1960 when there were 15 million workers in manufacturing, and 8.7 million collecting a paycheck from the government.”

The growth of taxpayer-funded dependency is directly connected with the growth in the economy. The more we make as a Nation, the more wealth we generate and the less people who rely on welfare to survive. To get there we need aggressive pro-growth policies in place to encourage free enterprise and discourage a Nation of taking. It is neither fair to the makers nor those who must rely on the government for the President to impose policies that reduce economic growth, reduce job creation, reduce savings and investment, and reduce opportunity and freedom.

In conclusion, free enterprise and meritocratic policies are consistent with our founding principles. As Thomas Jefferson declared in his first inaugural address, “A wise and frugal government . . . shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned.”

Will America remain the country our Founders envisioned or will we become a country where fairness means equal outcomes for all dictated by the government? Will we make it easier or harder for people to earn their success? And will the American people be happier if allowed to pursue their dreams, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, or if the government tries to force equal economic outcomes? Which is more moral, which is more fair, which is more American?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from Georgia.

#### PASSTHROUGH INCOME

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, if the distinguished whip will remain on the

floor for a second, as I was passing through listening to his speech, I wanted to add some meat on the bones of this business of passthrough income and the 940,000 American small businesses that will be affected dramatically by the President’s announcement today.

For 22 years, I ran a subchapter S corporation. A subchapter S corporation passes through its revenues to its investors who pay it at the ordinary income tax rate of an individual. Now, \$250,000 is not an inordinate amount of a number for somebody to have passed through to them in the ownership of a subchapter S corporation.

I passed the money through and paid them back based on the investment they made in the company I ran. When you raise the tax on the individual rate, then for a subchapter S corporation and limited liability corporation, for a limited partnership, you have two decisions to make as the runner of that operation: Do you reduce your retained earning investment in your company to maintain the return to your investors at the same level or do you continue to wind your company down because you cannot distribute at the rate you used to distribute?

It is very important to understand that whichever decision you make has a direct negative impact on future hiring in that company. The Congressional Research Service estimates 940,000 businesses will be affected. But listen to this number. As the leader has said, 53 percent of all passthrough income becomes subjected to the higher tax rate—53 percent, over half. That is American small business. So I want to commend the leader, because he has hit the heart of the story. This is a tax on what we need the most; that is, reinvestment of earnings to hire more people to build more businesses in America. This has the exact opposite effect on the middle class that the President described.

The second thing I will point out is that today America suffers economically from the uncertainty of what is going to happen postelection. With this proposal, the President has now made a recommendation that would extend that uncertainty for another year. The last thing American business needs is to have that uncertainty about when the next shoe is going to drop in terms of taxation on the middle class—or any class.

I commend the assistant leader for coming to the floor and telling the story about American business. We are not here to try to shelter the rich. We are here to empower business, to have more employees in the United States, and to empower our economy. Again, I commend the whip on his remarks on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO MRS. TONI RYSER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Mrs. Toni Ryser of Laurel County, KY, a businesswoman who is a pillar of her town, East Bernstadt. Mrs. Ryser’s entrepreneurial spirit caused her to open a furniture store in East Bernstadt, KY, in 1969 that continues to thrive and service the people of Kentucky and other States in the region. She is a shining example of a Kentuckian who has established a successful business while maintaining an important role in her community.

The daughter of Chester and Carrie Bales, Mrs. Ryser grew up in East Bernstadt. Despite hard financial times during the Great Depression, she grew up as a happy child. Her father was a truck driver and delivered groceries around Laurel County for Laurel Grocery, and her mother worked in the home. Her mother used to joke with family members that of the four children, Mrs. Ryser was the most difficult child because she always did what she wanted and had a mind of her own.

Mrs. Ryser graduated high school at age 16 and worked for Aetna Oil Company. In a bold move encouraged by her then-boss, Mrs. Ryser asked her would-be husband, R.D. Ryser, out to the movies for their first date. The couple married in June of 1947 and at age 20, Toni had their first child, Kandy. The Rysers had two more children, Bo and Kim, over the course of the next 5 years.

Though Mrs. Ryser always wanted to be a mother, she decided she wanted to do more than keep the house during the day. Remembering the skill her mother taught her as a child, she began sewing and selling drapes. Soon Mrs. Ryser’s drapery business grew and she could not complete orders as quickly as they arrived. As business increased, she decided to expand and not only sell draperies but also upscale furniture.

In 1969, Mrs. Ryser approached a furniture retailer that was hesitant to do business with her because of the rural nature of East Bernstadt. However, despite the concerns of the retailer, Mrs. Ryser decided she was going to sell furniture and was not dissuaded by the larger company’s misgivings. She never doubted her ability to sell the furniture and make a profit. So in September of 1969, when Toni was 39,

Ryser's Inc. was officially open for business.

Despite the continued success of the drapery business, Ryser's Inc. furniture sales did not really take off until 1972, when the Kentucky coal industry experienced a boom. The extra cash flow in the area caused the furniture business to flourish in East Bernstadt and the surrounding region. Before long, the entire family worked for the company: taking orders, making deliveries, and even offering advice on interior design.

Ryser's Inc. quickly became a premier name in furniture in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida. The store in East Bernstadt evolved into a warehouse, and Mrs. Ryser spent her time in the Laurel County area and the greater region bringing upscale furniture to the people. The reputation of the family business continued to grow over the years throughout the region and State and caused Mrs. Ryser to be named a Kentucky retailer of the year in the 1990s.

A long standing member of East Bernstadt Baptist Church, a dedicated wife and mother, and a successful business woman, Mrs. Toni Ryser is most deserving of recognition for her contributions to the greater Laurel County community and economy. Mrs. Ryser never hesitated in her journey to establish a fine furnishings store in a rural area some 40 years ago. It was her belief in herself, her family, and most importantly her fellow Kentuckians that allowed her dream to become an enduring reality.

I am honored to recognize Mrs. Toni Ryser's admirable commitment to building a successful family business in East Bernstadt, KY. I ask my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to join with me in celebrating Mrs. Ryser's entrepreneurial spirit and tenacity and her important contributions to the greater Laurel County community. A recent article published in the Sentinel-Echo, a Laurel County publication, highlighted Mrs. Ryser's accomplishments. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that said article appear in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sentinel-Echo, May 30, 2012]

FAITH AND FAMILY HELPED BUILD FURNITURE BUSINESS

(By Tara Kaprowy)

As Toni Ryser sits down to talk about her life, she is the picture of elegance. With soft, silver hair that frames her face and several long necklaces offsetting a black blouse, she sinks into an overstuffed chair whose arm a cat casually uses as leverage to stretch its back.

The room itself can only be described as magnificent, with ochre tomes topped against each other on grand bookshelves, drapes embroidered with the most delicate flowers, and a giant, opulent mirror standing sentinel on the far wall. Yet, despite the beauty, the room is comforting and unpretentious, much like Ryser herself.

She was born in Harlan County on Valentine's Day 1931, the daughter of Chester and

Carrie Bales. While Ryser was still very young, the family moved to Livingston before settling in Laurel County when she was 7. Chester "bought a truck and started hauling groceries for Laurel Grocery," Ryser said, while Carrie got to work making her home in East Bernstadt, something she was particularly gifted at doing.

"Mother could do anything," Ryser said. "We had beautiful clothes, we had wonderful food, we had a house that was spotless."

Though money was tight and the Great Depression was raging, there were always fresh-cut flowers in the house and "I always felt rich because mother knew how to sew so I always looked the part," she said.

Ryser was the second-born of four children, and though Carrie was a strict disciplinarian, Ryser had a "way of finagling and not doing any work so I was a very happy child," she said.

And a precocious one. At the age of 4, she was getting paid a quarter to dance on the tables and, throughout her childhood, she said she broke her nose once playing baseball and four more times doing "whatever else I could get children to play with me."

She recalled one occasion when an aunt, "who thought she was an aristocrat out of Louisville," came to visit.

"People used to discuss dying earlier than they do now," she remembered. "She said, 'Why Carrie, if something happens to you, who's going to take care of these children?' Mother said, 'Well, so-and-so would take Sara Lee. So-and-so would take Mikey. But I don't know who would want Toni.' I was really lazy."

Carrie was not, however, and when Ryser started attending East Bernstadt School, she was one of the best-dressed girls in her class.

"I went to school in starched pinafores every day," she said. "In fact, they often made a joke about how my butt had to be cold—I sat right on the seat because my dress went straight out."

Though she looked like she could be a city girl, her life was firmly planted in East Bernstadt, which "was a little more town than it is now," she said.

"We had a hotel, we bought groceries in East Bernstadt, we went to church in East Bernstadt, we went to the movies in East Bernstadt," she said. "Sometimes, when we got a little older, we would ride the train to London and see an afternoon movie and ride the train back, but we had pretty much what we needed right here in East Bernstadt."

Ryser was a good student but having fun was still her major goal, and she "liked to see what I could get away with," she said. She became fast friends with Betty Marie Muster and Pat Finney. Together, they were cheerleaders, with a photo still hanging at Weaver's of Ryser wearing her uniform. "Every Friday night, there was a dance at the Swiss Lodge," she remembered. "That was our big thing as we were going through high school. We did a lot of dancing."

She graduated from high school at 16 and "immediately got married." During her final semester, she'd gotten a job at Aetna Oil Company and her boss Mr. Miller looked over at Hunt's Cafe one day, saw R.D. Ryser, and said, "Go over, get a Coke, and ask R.D. out." She did, passing "Colonel" Harland David Sanders who was eating with Mr. Hunt along the way, and asked him.

"I said, 'Why don't we go to the movies tonight?' He said, 'No, I don't think so.' I said, 'I would like to go with you tonight. I'll be expecting you; I'll be ready at 7:30.' He says, 'I don't think so,' but at 7:30 he showed up. That was the end of him, we got married."

The wedding was in the afternoon of June 14, 1947.

"The thing I regret the most about it is my mother had made me the most beautiful wed-

ding dress," she said. "You can't even imagine in your wildest dreams what a pretty dress I had. I was so foolish; I never even saved it. It was organdy and it was white and it had a full skirt and sleeves to my elbows and it had the most gorgeous appliqued pink flowers and leaves all the way around the skirt that you've ever seen. Her work was beautiful. I mean, nothing today could compare with it. Now I'd give anything to have that dress."

Ryser and R.D. moved into the two-room washhouse in the back of her parent's house—"I don't know where mother did her laundry after that"—and in 1949 moved into a home they built together.

At the age of 20, she had her first child, Kandy, followed by Bo three years later and Kim two years after that.

"I had always wanted to be a mother, very definitely," she said. "I just thought it was wonderful." Like her father, R.D. was a truck driver, hauling coal to Louisville three times a week—a five hour trek—and returning that day with groceries for Laurel Grocery. Ryser stayed home to raise her children, which she loved doing.

By the time Kim was in sixth grade, though, "I got to thinking I didn't want to spend my time doing nothing, so I decided to start making draperies." She'd been taught to sew by her mother and deeply enjoyed the meticulous work. Asking her friend Ruth Gabbard to help, she went into business and soon had so many orders they could hardly keep up.

"We'd stay backed up. Generally when we'd take an order, we'd tell them it would be two to three months," she said.

Eventually, the pressure to couple her drapery business with a furniture store grew.

"What changed things is I would go out to hang drapes and would spend maybe half a day with someone telling them what kind of sofa to go buy or where should they set their bed and wouldn't it be good to hang lights on the wall, that kind of conversation," she said. "I saw I was spending an awful lot of time, so I said if I'm going to spend my time with furniture, I'm going to be selling furniture."

Opening up a furniture store—which she decided from the beginning would be very high end—in the middle of East Bernstadt was risky. But she had the full support of her husband—"He was enough Swiss that if it was making money, he was for it," she joked—and so headed to market in High Point, N.C. She approached the big, upscale furniture lines, one of the only women there who was the main buyer.

"I went to Henredon and they didn't much want to open an account with me," she said. "They'd looked at East Bernstadt on a map. They said, 'Here's what we'll do: You place an order for \$20,000. We won't say we'll let you have an account, but we'll come by and see your place, and then we'll know if we want to take you on as a customer.' So he comes by, there's cows on this side, cows on the other side of the store, and he says, 'I want to know: Who in the world do you hope to sell furniture to?' I said, 'I'm not a bit worried about it, you just better believe I'll sell it.' So he opened up an account that day, and there never was any confusion after that."

Having put up everything she and her husband owned as collateral, Ryser's Inc. opened in September 1969. Ryser was 39.

She was soon working around the clock, keeping her focus by reminding herself, "All we have to lose is everything R.D. has ever worked for since he was 17."

The drapery business continued to flourish, but it wasn't until the coal boom in 1972 that furniture sales truly took off.

"Over night, many coal companies large and small hit the big time and there was lots

of extra money in circulation," she said. "We happened to be in the right place at the right time. We had a large inventory and were willing to work night and day to help with their furniture needs. The bottom line was business was good."

Gabbard and two other women continued making draperies, and Ryser hired her family to do everything else.

"It wasn't too long before Kandy was at the store," she said. "Bo was helping. I'd go out to the high school and Harold Storm was the principal. I'd say, 'Can Bo go with us?' And he'd say, 'How many do you want, Toni?' He'd give me two or three boys and so off we'd go with a truck full of furniture and drapes to hang."

Once arriving at their destination, Ryser would work her magic, attending to every last detail in a room.

"We did everything," she said. "We moved their old furniture until it looked nice, we put the new pieces in that they really needed. You set up and then you don't want to see a little lamp on the floor, you don't want to leave a picture hanging over here when it should have gone over there, so you just start doing it."

Once the home owner arrived home, the room would be completely transformed, with the pieces they knew they were buying accompanied by their existing furniture and a few extras that rounded out the space. The effect was enchanting, with all the parts seamlessly coming together to make the whole.

Her eye for design was flawless, with one customer who dealt in antiques asking her what she thought about his plan to mass produce the look of an antique table. Her opinion was so valuable to him that he called it the Mrs. Ryser table, which to this day is still being sold.

Word traveled fast, with the Rysers name soon extending throughout Kentucky and spreading down into Tennessee and Florida.

Ryser was having a ball and was on the road every day, telling her children, "If we are in the store, we aren't making money." Indeed, given its remote location, the store was always meant to be more of a warehouse than a space for customers to shop.

When Bo was in college, she said she "saw she had too much to handle" and the flooring side of the business was getting neglected, "so I told my son, 'If you want to buy the business, it's here for you.'"

He did. Kandy, meanwhile, had her own set of customers, and Kim, after graduating from Eastern Kentucky University's school of design, joined her siblings. Even her mother Carrie had a hand in things.

"Mother would come down and would tell them a thing or two about drapes. It was her way or no way," she laughed. "But Ruth, she never one time get upset that mother tried to boss. Ruth is a wonderful person, that was her nature."

Business continued to grow, with customers by now all over the country. In the 1990s, Ryser was named Kentucky's retailer of the year.

Though she stayed constantly busy, "thinking nothing of going in at midnight or one in the morning," Sundays were reserved for church and family.

To this day, she remains one of the most faithful members of East Bernstadt Baptist Church, with Pastor Norm Brock joking the only way to keep Ryser at home on a snowy, icy Sunday morning is to cancel church.

"I feel like God has walked beside me my whole life, my whole life," she said. "I like to give credit where it's due and it's definitely not due me."

Every Sunday evening, she would cook a sprawling family dinner.

"We had a ball," she said. "They would bring their dates, their friends and this

house would fill up from that end to this end. We'd all settle down in my kitchen and there weren't enough seats and all we'd do is discuss all the fun we'd had all week."

In 1992, she and R.D. decided to build a new house on the land on which he was born and, since they'd enjoyed their first home so much, decided to replicate the floor plan to the letter. She continues to live there.

In 2003, R.D. suffered a stroke and Ryser left the store to take care of him. She returned to work after he died a year later, but in 2006 Ryser also had a stroke. She's taken a back seat to the business for the past five years. But she continues to be active and last spring took a few months off from her regular Body Recall aerobics class to redecorate for a friend who was wintering in Florida but needed her Lexington home completely redone in time for Derby. She only trusted Ryser to do it.

Looking back, Ryser's eyes light up while talking about the excitement of the business and become moist when talking about her faith and family. When asked if she's proud of what she's accomplished, she shakes her head and sits up in her overstuffed chair.

"I'm proud of my family," she said. "I don't feel proud of myself. I've enjoyed it. I enjoyed it a lot."

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### SOPHIA, WEST VIRGINIA

• **Mr. ROCKEFELLER.** Mr. President, today I wish to bring attention to a small town in my home State. Sophia, WV, began its 100-year anniversary celebration on June 2, 2012, and will hold a litany of festive events throughout most of the summer.

Many of you present today will recall that Sophia is the town our dear friend and colleague, Senator Robert C. Byrd, so often referred to when he spoke of his home among the hills. This beautiful community served as his and Erma's haven for much of their lives.

The town of Sophia is reportedly named for Sophia Gravley McGinnis, who was born 200 years ago, in 1812. Mrs. McGinnis and her husband, Pyrrhus McGinnis, owned nearly 2,000 acres of land in and around the area according to the family's historical documents. Sophia became the first official citizen and its endeared namesake when the town incorporated in 1912. She went on to live to the ripe age of 104 years old and died in March of 1916. She is buried near Flat Top, WV.

Many times over, Senator Byrd reflected on his and Erma's time in Sophia, fondly remembering the friendships and once-bustling economy. Historically, the town of Sophia was known as the epicenter of the Winding Gulf region where countless tons of coal have been mined and transported all over the world via the extensive rail network intersecting the region.

Senator Byrd is certainly Sophia's favorite son. The memories he shared so freely with all of us act as a reminder of the importance of coal and its far-reaching impact on the State of West Virginia and our Nation. They also bring to mind the tremendous character of the people who helped cre-

ate those memories and how they helped guide him in his duties as the longest serving member of the Congress.

Unfortunately, as with many towns across our great land, Sophia fell on hard times for a number of years. With the march of technology and the mechanization of the coal industry, fewer men were needed to mine coal and service the railroads, causing Sophia's population to quickly dwindle. Grocers and markets and small shops began to close their doors. Schools helping to educate the children of Sophia were consolidated. The town soon became a shell of its former glory.

However, like other parts of West Virginia that have experienced decline, the citizens of the town of Sophia never gave up. Their story continues today and proves to be a testament of the talented and dedicated residents living there. Many of the efforts to revitalize this rural village have resulted in enormous success. Economic development initiatives have culminated in a bright future for Sophia that includes an economy of growth and a renewal of the spirit that lies deep within the hearts of the people Senator Byrd held in such high regard.

Evidence of the revitalization in the town of Sophia includes the opening of the Affinity Coal mining operation and the regular passage of railcars once again full of coal. Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park is bringing visitors from all across the Nation and the rich heritage of the coal industry is creating new tourism proposals and interest in the studies of mine safety and engineering. The young men and women of Sophia are no longer forced to leave their homes to find gainful employment because opportunities are once again available to them and their families.

All of these measures bring me to the floor to recognize what should be considered a shining example of dedication and commitment in times of hardship and adversity. On behalf of the people of the town of Sophia, it brings me great pride to present this statement in recognition of a community spirit that has fostered ongoing transformation, while always holding true to a history rich with fortitude.●

#### FEDERAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION REPORT

Derek J. Mitchell, of Connecticut, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of Burma, discharged from the Committee on Foreign Relations and confirmed by the Senate on June 29, 2012:

Nominee: Derek J. Mitchell.

Post: Burma.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee: