

there are a plethora of days in this Nation known for various causes, for issues, and for historical occurrences. Human Rights Day is fundamentally American.

The rights of human beings are the reason this Nation was founded and the motivation for the war that was fought to make us free. Human Rights Day is about advancing equality, and the U.S. Constitution as it has expanded over the years to include new groups of people and strike down barriers of race, gender, ethnic background, and national origin. It is about the progress of human rights and equality, the noblest of causes for this Nation. It is about what brings us together as Americans, the fight for freedom, the search for equality and justice.

I want to talk about three specific ways we can advance the cause of human rights in this Chamber, in this session, through measures that are now before us. The first concerns human trafficking. I have been particularly interested in the rampant human trafficking problems on American military bases abroad in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Victims are recruited from developing countries like Bangladesh and the Philippines. They are charged exorbitant, illegal fees to travel to their worksites, often misled about where they are going, what their salaries will be, and what their living conditions will be like. Frequently, their passports are confiscated so they cannot return home, even if they are able to scrape together the money to make that journey.

This kind of human trafficking is no less than modern-day slavery, subsidized by our government with taxpayer money. It is reprehensible. But, for me, the number one issue is the safety of our American troops on these bases. That safety is compromised if our bases are filled with unauthorized, potentially unsafe foreign workers.

That is why I introduced the End Trafficking in Government Contracting Act of 2012, which provides the most comprehensive legislative approach to solving this problem ever undertaken by the United States Congress. It is bipartisan legislation, which now is included in the Defense Reauthorization bill that passed the Senate last week, and I am hopeful that this provision will be retained in conference committee and signed into law soon with strong bipartisan support from my colleague, Senator PORTMAN of Ohio.

In addition, I want to thank Senator LEAHY for advancing the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, a broader measure known by its initials, TVPRA, which takes an even more inclusive view of this problem to make sure America stands against human trafficking rather than be complicit in it.

The second issue I want to raise is the VAWA, or the Violence Against Women Act, which continues to be stalled in the House of Representa-

tives. Tragically, incomprehensibly, and passed by this body, VAWA still has not been approved in a form that is acceptable by the House of Representatives. Reauthorizing VAWA is a top priority for me, and I know for many in this body, as well. My hope is that the House of Representatives will act in the final weeks of this session.

VAWA is a landmark statute aimed at combating domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It provides billions of dollars to support investigations and prosecutions of vicious, heinous acts, and it provides remedies and protection for assaulted women.

On this day, when we celebrate human rights, what better way than to commemorate the advances that VAWA made in fighting violence against women and to broaden its provisions to protect Native Americans, immigrants in this country, and the gay and lesbian community. That is the nature of our democracy: we advance human rights, we make them more inclusive, and we broaden their provisions. The reauthorization of this legislation is badly needed.

Finally, I want to talk about the DREAM Act, which should be part of immigration reform in this country. I think the vast majority of the Members of the Senate have accepted and indeed espoused the need for thorough, comprehensive immigration reform. That kind of reform should include the DREAM Act. I have spoken about it on many occasions, and on many of those occasions I have presented to this body an individual story as I have, for example, about Solanly Canas.

I brought her photograph with me today. She is a young woman of enormous promise who simply wants to stay in this country, and have a path to citizenship. Having been brought here at the age of 12, she didn't choose to come, she was brought here through no fault or doing of her own, and this is her country. This is where her friends are; this is the language she speaks. She lives in East Haven, Connecticut, where she attended school, and she has thrived there. She became a member of the National Honor Society. She is on the executive board of the student council. She is president of the Inter-act Club.

She was born in Colombia, but her roots are in America. She has dreams and goals for the future like any young woman her age, and she is proud of her connection, her roots in this country. She wants to go to college, but for so long has feared that she would not be able to go.

She is eligible to apply for the Deferred Action Program announced by the administration, but that program would simply give her a reprieve without the security and certainty that she needs to advance and continue her schooling. That is the path to citizenship that our Dreamers need and deserve so that they can go to school, serve in our military, give back to this country, and earn their citizenship

through deeds—not just words, but deeds—that make us all proud, and contribute to the quality of life in our Nation.

That is what they want to do is to earn the citizenship that so many of us take for granted. So many people in this country have this as a birthright—without the effort that she will devote to becoming a U.S. citizen. We have great citizens born here who value and prize their citizenship. But Solanly is one who deserves a path and the ability to earn it through her deeds and her accomplishments in school and afterwards.

On this Human Rights Day, I thank this body for giving me the honor of speaking about these issues. It is an extraordinary honor to say how much human rights mean in this country. We are the paragon of equality, freedom, and rights. We are the greatest Nation in the history of the world, and we are still a work in progress. We still have progress to make, and these three measures will help us to do it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. 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. BLUMENTHAL. 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 BUDDY GUY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure today to recognize Buddy Guy, who was recently honored here in Washington at the Kennedy Center for his contribution to the arts.

George "Buddy" Guy was born in 1936 into a Louisiana sharecropper family. He first learned to play music on hand-made instruments.

With no money, Guy moved to Chicago in 1957 at the peak of the Chicago's blues era. A stranger introduced him at Chicago's 708 Club, where he eventually landed a steady gig. He also played at other local venues, and eventually he signed a record deal. Chicago connected Guy with legendary artists and allowed him to play guitar with blues greats like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. However, it was not until his 1991 release of "Damn Right, I've Got the Blues" that his career started making national headlines. The album earned him his first Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Artist and five W.C. Handy awards.

After that, the awards started streaming in. He earned 5 more

Grammy Awards and 18 more W.C. Handy awards—more than any other artist. In 2003, he received the National Medal of Arts for his extraordinary contributions to the creation, growth, and support in the arts. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame in 2008. Billboard Magazine gave him the Century Award for distinguished artistic achievement, and Rolling Stone ranked him at No. 23 on the list of 100 Greatest Guitarists.

If that is not impressive enough, Eric Clapton once described him as the best guitar player alive. And Guy's songs have been covered by Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones, Stevie Ray Vaughan, John Mayall, Jack Bruce, and others.

Although Guy was born in Louisiana, today Chicago, IL, is proud to claim him as one of our own. In 1989 he opened Buddy Guy's Legends in Chicago, and it remains one of the most successful blues joints in the city. He has been called Windy City's reigning blues artist and the last strand linking the immortal Chicago bluesmen of the 1950s with the contemporary blues scene. Mayor Rahm Emanuel called Guy a "great Chicago treasure."

As one of his album titles suggests, he "Can't Quit the Blues." Even well into his seventies, he is making music. Guy tours constantly, appearing at blues clubs and festivals around the world, and he won his most recent Grammy in 2012.

President Obama called Guy "one of the last guardians of the great American blues." And on December 2, Guy was recognized at a White House reception as one of the 2012 Kennedy Center honorees for his contribution to the arts.

As Guy said himself, "From picking cotton in the field to picking a guitar in the White House, that is a long ways man."

TRIBUTE TO DAVE WHITE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after nearly four decades of service with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, NRCS, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, last week, Mr. Dave White settled into retirement. He will be missed for his dedication, enthusiasm, and steadfast support of conservation causes, as well as his keen sense of humor and sharp wit, which kept both his staff, and Members of Congress, on their toes.

During his long career, Dave has shown great leadership in conservation, improving the Nation's land management policies and practices, and ensuring that we meet our shared goal for sustaining agriculture and natural resources. His work has ensured that private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, a goal that has grown in importance as weather disasters like Tropical Storm Irene, Hurricane Sandy, and the record drought still gripping the

Midwest become more frequent and severe.

Dave wore many hats during his time at NRCS. From 2002 to 2008, he served as the State Conservationist in Montana where he helped farmers and ranchers improve agricultural production, while at the same time reducing their impact on the environment. After learning about Dave's many outstanding achievements in Montana, my only regret was that we were not able to add NRCS State Conservationist in Vermont to Chief White's already sterling resume.

Later, in 2007 and 2008, Dave was detailed to Senator HARKIN's office, where his help in drafting the conservation title of the 2008 farm bill was immeasurable. I am deeply thankful for his assistance on this vital legislation, and for his thoughtful consideration of programs that have been so vital to Vermont's conservation efforts, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Farmland Protection Program, and Regional Equity, which have all contributed to the protection and improvement of Lake Champlain. President Obama then appointed Dave to lead NRCS, a role that he has filled admirably for 4 years working closely with Secretary Vilsack to advance voluntary, incentive-based private land conservation.

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to Chief White for his years of dedicated service to this Nation. I wish him well in his retirement and I hope he will come visit us soon in Vermont to sample our many delicious "value-added" agricultural products.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT RUSSELL NEARY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to remember Lieutenant Russell Neary, a brave volunteer firefighter who was killed in the line of duty during Hurricane Sandy. He served the Town of Easton as President of the Easton Volunteer Fire Company and volunteer EMT and worked in Stamford as a vice president of General Reinsurance Company. He was deeply respected as a friendly and compassionate resident and beloved father and husband. I know his family well.

When Sandy struck Connecticut the evening of October 29, Lieutenant Neary responded to a call without hesitation—one of the many evenings over the past 13 years when he put himself in harm's way to respond to a resident in need. Tragically, when clearing the road of a fallen branch, he was fatally injured. Lieutenant Neary was the first firefighter in Easton's history to die in the line of duty. His family has a history of public service, including his brother Fire Marshal Peter Neary.

In the following days after this tragedy, members of neighboring fire departments and emergency responders volunteered their time to assist Easton Fire Company firefighters, allowing them to mourn the death of their col-

league and friend—a demonstration of brotherhood and solidarity across Connecticut public safety personnel.

Regarded as family by Chief James M. Girardi and fellow members of the Easton Volunteer Fire Company, Lieutenant Neary was tearfully mourned and remembered for days after his tragic death as "a powerful force of good will and compassion to all who met him." He was recalled by many as a sincere member of the community who genuinely cared for and enjoyed helping others. I joined more than 1,000 people—gathered from around Connecticut, the Nation, and even Canada to pay tribute to this remarkable public servant. His legacy will live on through this spirit of giving that has touched and inspired so many.

I am honored to salute Lieutenant Neary and invite my Senate colleagues to join me in commemorating the life of this gracious first responder, friend, and family member, who lost his life while keeping others safe from harm.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING DONALD SINGER

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor of Col. Donald M. Singer, an airman who fought in Vietnam and a hero of America.

Donald and his wife Elizabeth had four children.

He was stationed as an Electronic Warfare Officer at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. This Nation called Donald Singer to service in Vietnam in April of 1966. After training in California and before his deployment overseas, Donald got to attend the confirmation of his oldest daughter, 10-year-old Susan. That was the last time Susan saw her dad.

Maj. Donald Singer was selected to be part of an elite group of airmen known as the "Wild Weasels." In August of 1966, on a mission north of Hanoi, North Vietnamese forces shot down his F-105 fighter jet. Both men on board ejected.

Nobody knows exactly what happened after that. But reports indicate Donald's parachute never fully opened. And he was never heard from again. The U.S. Government considered Donald missing in action and despite his status, promoted him to the rank of colonel.

Eleven years later, in 1977, the Singer family got a phone call. Donald's remains had been found. And at last, he was coming home to the United States. Today, Colonel Singer's remains rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

Although Colonel Singer was a decorated airman, his family never received all the honors he earned in service to this Nation.

It was my honor to present them to his daughter Susan, on her birthday, December 7, 2012. On behalf of a grateful nation, I presented Col. Donald Singer's Purple Heart, Air Force Commendation Medal, and his Presidential Unit Citation.