

and Daniel Inouye, Charlie retired April 6, 2013. Today, on his one month retirement anniversary, we reflect on his quiet and steady leadership which was so important to the work of the Appropriations Committee and the Senate.

Charlie began his career on the Appropriations Committee as a professional staff member for the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in 1987. He was quickly promoted and assumed the role of democratic clerk starting in 1995. In that capacity, Charlie worked on nearly every issue in the defense area from purchasing weapons to personnel issues.

Charlie's work on the Defense Subcommittee enabled our Nation's military to transform itself from a Cold War-era force to the agile and quick response force that exists today. Charlie played a major role in helping modernize our weapon systems, including helping secure funding for the development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles—UAVs. Funding for UAVs helped to change the tide of the latest conflict in our favor and will continue to play a major role as we continue to prosecute and disrupt terrorist activities worldwide.

The role of UAVs in today's warfare is especially evident in my home State of Nevada. Creech Air Force Base is home to the famed Predator and Reaper aerial vehicles. For decades, Creech Air Force Base was comprised of a few buildings and a single runway, but Charlie's hard work on the Appropriations Committee led to significant investment in infrastructure and increases in Nevada military personnel. These additional resources have transformed Indian Springs Auxiliary base to Creech Air Force Base, the premier UAV installation in the world, supporting air and ground combat, reconnaissance, and search and rescue.

In 2009, Charlie assumed his current role as the staff director for the Senate Appropriations Committee. As our Nation was dealing with the effects of the great recession, Charlie helped develop policies to invest in American infrastructure and jumpstart the economy. His in-depth knowledge about the intricacies of the legislative process, coupled with his sense of humor, allowed him to keep order among the various subcommittees and continue the bipartisan nature of the Committee.

Charlie played a major role in nearly every appropriation issue during the last 5 years. From continuing resolutions to omnibus appropriations measures, Charlie helped navigate the Congressional landscape to ensure passage into law. In particular, Charlie worked with my staff to help avert a government shutdown and enact the Budget Control Act. I will always be grateful for Charlie's hard work on this piece of legislation.

Although the Senate and Nevada will miss Charlie's deep institutional knowledge about the appropriations process and the Federal budget, I am

confident that Charlie's work left a lasting mark on our Nation and on Congress. I am happy to thank Charlie for his three decades of service and wish him well in his retirement.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, more than 20 years ago, family members of workers killed on the job joined with safety advocates to launch Workers Memorial Day—a day of remembrance and advocacy. To honor the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, April 28 was chosen as Workers Memorial Day.

The passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which created OSHA, was one of the monumental legislative achievements of the 20th century. This landmark legislation, passed over four decades ago, reflects the values that all Americans share: that workers shouldn't have to risk their lives to earn their livelihood, and that workers, employers, and the government must all work together to keep people safe and healthy on the job.

Since that time, workplace safety and health conditions have improved dramatically. In the year the OSH Act was enacted, our country saw 13,800 on-the-job deaths. Forty years later, in 2010, that number is down by more than 60 percent. It is without dispute that this legislation has saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of American workers in its 40-year lifespan, a remarkable accomplishment.

In addition to saving lives, OSHA saves our country money. The total financial cost of job injuries and illnesses is enormous—estimated at \$250 billion to \$300 billion a year. Preventing illnesses and injuries before they happen makes economic sense, in addition to being the right thing to do.

So today, on Worker's Memorial Day, we celebrate the success of OSHA. But we also must acknowledge its limitations. Too many workers remain at serious risk of injury, illness or death on the job, as demonstrated by the recent fertilizer explosion in West Texas that killed at least 14 and injured over 200. In 2011, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4,693 workers were killed on the job—an average of 13 workers every day—and nearly 3 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses were reported that same year. In our great State of Iowa, 93 workers died on the job in 2011. Additionally, 43 Iowans died from injuries sustained while working, and untold numbers of Iowans were injured from exposures in the workplace. We absolutely can—and must—do better.

That's why I am a co-sponsor of the Protecting America's Workers Act, a piece of legislation that would build on OSHA's successes and save the lives of countless additional workers. The bill makes commonsense reforms to bring our workplace safety laws into the 21st century, with minimal burden on the vast majority of employers that comply with the law.

One critical aspect of the Protecting America's Workers Act is that it will enhance the protection provided to workers who blow the whistle on unsafe conditions in the workplace. OSHA does not have the necessary resources to inspect every workplace in the country on a regular basis, so whistleblowers play an essential role in identifying dangerous conditions. Because OSHA enforcement is aided by whistleblowers, it is in all of our interests to protect whistleblowers from unfair retaliation so they are not afraid to come forward. But the whistleblower provision in OSHA has not been significantly amended or improved since it was enacted and has fallen far behind similar retaliation protections in other worker protection, public health, and environmental laws. The Protecting America's Workers Act will remedy that problem by strengthening whistleblower protections so more workers will feel comfortable reporting dangerous conditions and work environments can improve for all.

In addition to protecting whistleblowers, the Protecting America's Workers Act also extends OSHA protections to more workers, increases penalties for employers who break the law, enhances public accountability, and clarifies the duty of employers in providing a safe work environment. These changes together comprise a critical step towards providing a safer workplace for every worker in our country, and I plan to do everything possible to fight for this important legislation.

While we have made tremendous progress in that last 40 years under OSHA, there is much more work to be done. All Americans have the right to a safe workplace, and we should not rest until all of our fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, families, and friends can go to work each day knowing they will come home safely again each night.

TRIBUTE TO ART GRATIAS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Art Gratias of Mason City, IA on receiving the Legion of Honor from the French Government for his contribution to the liberation of France. Art Gratias enlisted in the U.S. Army in January of 1942, having begun the enlistment process before the attack on Pearl Harbor that led to the formal participation of the United States in World War II. As a member of the 2nd Infantry Division, he participated in the D-day invasion of Normandy, which took place on his first wedding anniversary. Art fought in numerous campaigns in France and Central Europe, including the Battle of the Bulge. He was wounded on August 16, 1944, receiving the Purple Heart and later returned to combat.

The French Government has expressed its gratitude to Art Gratias for what he did for their country. I would

now like to take this opportunity to thank Art for his service to our country. In fact, despite the fact that he gave more to this country through his military service than we can ever thank him for, he continued to dedicate his life to public service. Art has been a school board member, teacher, and school administrator. He has been very active in the Kiwanis, American Legion, and his church. Art has served on numerous volunteer boards, and in the Iowa Senate. Art Gratias is a prime example of that remarkable American spirit of voluntarism that the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville discovered in the early years of our Nation so it is fitting that he was singled out by the French Government for its highest honor. I am proud to add my voice to those who pay tribute to his life of service.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, since 1974, the Community Development Block Grant program has provided cities and counties with critical funding to help low and moderate income people through community projects for economic development, revitalization and infrastructure improvements.

The Community Development Block Grant program also gives local governments the flexibility to use some of this funding to provide basic public services directly to the most vulnerable people in their communities.

These essential services include providing meals, clean water, shelter and clothing to low income senior citizens, abused or neglected children, the disabled and the homeless.

For all the good programs that the Community Development Block Grant program does, communities are limited because local governments can only spend a maximum of 15 percent of their funding on these vital services.

For many of our local communities in Florida and across the country, the 15 percent cap is too low to adequately help the number of people in need, especially during these tough times.

In one particular case, the City of Miami wants so desperately to use more of its Community Development Block Grant funds for assistance to seniors for food programs, but they can't because of the 15 percent cap.

That is why I filed S. 855 on April 25, to raise that modest amount so that grant recipients can tailor the program to the needs of their communities, in this particular example, the needs of senior citizens.

This important legislation, which is being reintroduced in the House by Representative ROS-LEHTINEN, allows local governments to spend up to 25 percent of their funding for the Community Block Development program on essential public services, rather than just 15 percent.

The bill does not require local governments to spend 25 percent of their

funding on services, but it gives them the flexibility to do so if it is in the best interest of their communities.

Let me be clear, the bill does not increase funding to any part of the Community Development Block Grant program. It simply allows local communities to do more with what they have, which is why both the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities have supported this position.

I hope that we in the Senate will take this critical step to help local governments to ensure that the most, vulnerable will continue to receive the most basic services.

USS "JOHN RODGERS"

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I submit these remarks today to honor the achievements of the USS *John Rodgers*, DD-574, a Fletcher-class destroyer of the United States Navy. The USS *John Rodgers* was commissioned on February 9, 1943, with Commander H.O. Parish, USN, commanding.

The USS *John Rodgers* joined the Pacific Fleet upon arrival in Pearl Harbor in June 1943. During her 2 years of almost constant service in the forward area, the USS *John Rodgers* was under frequent air attacks, yet still assisted other ships and planes in destroying innumerable enemy aircraft.

The courageous crew of the USS *John Rodgers* sank an enemy patrol craft, destroyed six mines, rescued twenty-five downed airmen, to include three British personnel, and engaged in eight bombardments of Japanese held territory in support of various amphibious operations.

The sailors of USS *John Rodgers* bravely executed an anti-shipping sweep 30 miles into Suruga Qan, the deepest penetration of Japanese homewaters made by surface vessels during the war. The crew was recognized by the commanding general, Third Marine Division, for outstanding performance while in contact with the enemy.

The commanding officers and squadron commanders who embarked in this vessel and honorably served the USS *John Rodgers*: Captain E.M. Thompson, Captain Henry Crommelin, and Captain Joseph W. Ludewig, Commander H.O. Parish, and Commander J.G. Franklin.

The USS *John Rodgers* earned 12 battle stars in World War II, and remarkably she sustained zero personnel losses during her service. At all times the morale of the crew was excellent and in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service.

The USS *John Rodgers* was decommissioned on 25 May 1946. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the sailors and the families of the USS *John Rodgers* for their commitment, patriotism, and dedication to the USS *John Rodgers*, the United States Navy, and the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED SERVICES

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor 453 high school seniors in 8 northeast Ohio counties who deserve this Nation's eternal gratitude for their commendable decision to enlist in the United States Armed Forces. Of these 453 seniors from 130 high schools in 93 towns and cities, 86 will enter the Army, 171 will enter the Marine Corps, 62 will enter the Navy, 43 will enter the Air Force, 3 will enter the Coast Guard, 82 will enter our Ohio Army National Guard, and 6 will enter into the Ohio Air National Guard. In the presence of their parents/guardians, and high school counselors, military leaders, city and business leaders, all 453 will be recognized on May 7, 2013 by "Our Community Salutes of Northeast Ohio."

In a few short weeks, these young men and women will join with many of their classmates in celebration of their high school graduation. At a time when many of their peers are looking forward to pursuing vocational training or college degrees, or are uncertain about their future, these young men and women instead have chosen to dedicate themselves to military service in defense of our rights, our freedoms, and our country.

I have no doubt that many are anxious about the uncertainties that await them as members of the Armed Forces. But they do not go forward from their homes and their families alone. They should rest assured that the full support and resources of this Chamber, and the American people, are with them in whatever challenges may lie ahead.

These 453 young men and women are the cornerstone of our liberties. It is thanks to their dedication and the dedication of an untold number of patriots just like them that we are able to meet here today, in the U.S. Senate, and openly debate the best solutions to the many diverse problems that confront our country. It is thanks to their sacrifices that the United States of America remains a beacon of hope and freedom in a dangerous world. We are grateful to them, and we are grateful to their parents and their communities for instilling in them not only the mental and physical abilities our Armed Forces require, but more importantly the character, the values, and the discipline that leads someone to put service to our Nation over self.

Their decision to serve our country will not go unrecognized, not by the veterans who will stop to salute them as they pass, nor by the everyday Americans who will shake their hands in grocery stores and gas stations and airports, just to let them know how much we all appreciate their service. I would like to personally thank these 453 graduating seniors for their selflessness and the courage that they have shown by volunteering to risk their lives in defense of our Nation. We owe them, along with all those who