

I am proud to have worked with the chairman and ranking member to develop the programs in this bill that maintain the traditions of providing farmers with financial resources to mitigate nutrient and sediment loss from their farms.

Perhaps, what is even more important than the specific financial resources this bill provides farmers to implement conservation activities on their farms is reestablishing the requirement that farms must protect highly erodible lands and wetlands in order to qualify for crop insurance premium assistance. This was an issue that I was proud to help champion last year and that ultimately my Republican friend, the Senior Senator from Georgia, was able to win a floor vote to require any producer seeking crop insurance premium assistance to also meet a basic set of conservation compliance criteria established under the Sodbuster and Swampbuster programs.

The concept behind the conservation compliance programs is simple: The expenditure of Federal taxpayer dollars in support of farming operations cannot support farming practices that result in drainage of wetlands or farming of highly erodible lands. These conservation compliance requirements have long been accepted and applied to broadly to a variety of other longstanding farmer financial safety net programs. In fact, up until the 1996 farm bill these conservation compliance programs also applied to Federal crop insurance premium assistance programs.

These minimum qualifications have been a success in ensuring that Federal taxpayer dollars are not supporting farming practices that lead to costly natural resource degradation. In Maryland, however, these practices are common place not just because our farmers want to be good stewards of the bay but because the State requires farmers to manage for wetland and soil loss on their farms.

While I am proud of my Maryland farmers for their conservation work, they are punished in the marketplace for their good stewardship where they compete with producers whose production costs are lower because their operations are located in States that do not require mitigating the impacts of their operations on the natural environment.

Because the 2013 farm bill aims to move farmers out of direct payment programs and into expanded Crop Insurance Premium Assistance programs, reestablishing conservation compliance eligibility requirements for the Crop Insurance Program helps level the competitive playing field for Maryland farmers and other State's agricultural sectors that are doing what is right to protect the environment.

While mine and Senator CHAMBLISS's efforts last year were met with significant challenges last year, a series of discussions between our Nation's leading agricultural interests groups, like the American Farm Bureau, and our

Nation's top wildlife and conservation organizations resulted in a mutually agreed proposal to re-link conservation compliance requirements to the crop insurance premium assistance program.

The Federal safety the farm bill provides for both farmers growing our Nation's food and low income families who have difficulty putting food on the table continues on in this bill but with needed reforms. I am proud to support this bill and congratulate the chair and ranking member.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, yesterday, I voted against passage of S. 954, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013, which is commonly known as the farm bill. With an overall cost of nearly \$1 trillion, this legislation is more than we can afford at a time when our debt of nearly \$17 trillion is growing rapidly each day. While I support some of the programs in this bill that are important to Florida and our State's important role in America's food supply, we cannot allow Washington to continue spending recklessly and condemning our children and grandchildren to a diminished future.

Not only was I concerned about the cost of this legislation, but I am disappointed that ample opportunity was not provided to Senators to improve it through a more open amendment process. When the farm bill was considered last year, the Senate voted on over 70 amendments to the bill, including my RAISE Act amendment, which would have allowed workers to earn more money for a job well done without having to first clear it by union bosses. This open process was not the case this time around and prevented my colleagues and I from introducing measures to improve the bill, as well as timely measures such as my proposal to punish Internal Revenue Service employees who violate the First Amendment rights of our citizens.

I remain committed to championing sound policy important to the farmers and working families that contribute to the agriculture industry's success and whose products ultimately end up at our dinner tables. It is why I am pursuing reforms in other areas that would benefit our farmers and our Nation. For example, I continue working towards national immigration reform, which would help create a guest worker visa program to ensure an adequate agriculture workforce. This reform would achieve an agricultural workers program that allows us to bring in both temporary and long-term laborers to provide our farms, dairies and other agricultural industries with the workers they need and in a way that also protects the dignity and safety of those workers.

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, yesterday, I voted for the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013—the farm bill—which makes important reforms, such as ending the practice of direct payment agricultural subsidies, and provides strong support to our

local farmers which will help stabilize our food policies and increase access to fresh produce for the next decade.

I especially want to acknowledge and thank Senator COWAN, with whom I worked closely, for his successful effort to include in this bill a provision that was also advocated by former Senator Kerry to help our struggling fishermen in Massachusetts. This provision extends eligibility in the emergency disaster loan program to fishermen.

When our farmers are struck by disasters, they have access to low-interest emergency disaster—EM—loans available through USDA's Farm Service Agency. These loans have been used in the past by farmers, ranchers, and aqua farmers to help recover from crop production losses. Now, our Nation's fishermen will also have access to this important loan program.

I am also proud to have worked with Senator COWAN on his amendment to authorize the Department of Agriculture to conduct a study to propose a method for a voluntary crop insurance program for seafood harvesters. Fisherman and farmers face the same economic hardships when there are significant drops in production. This study is an important step toward providing the seafood industry with an insurance product to reduce their risk. I thank Senator COWAN and former Senator Kerry for their leadership on these efforts to help out fisherman who experiencing very difficult economic hardships.

Although I am proud to support the broad policies in this legislation, there are certain measures in this bill that I strongly oppose and that I will push to modify when the bill is considered in conference.

In particular, I am deeply concerned with the changes that the farm bill makes to the SNAP program. I will continue working to ensure that assistance is available to all families who need help putting food on the table.

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in May, thousands of law enforcement officers from around the Nation came together at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC to commemorate Peace Officers Memorial Day. The Congressional resolution that created this day of reflection dedicated it to the extraordinary law enforcement officers "who, night and day, stand guard in our midst to protect us through enforcement of our laws," as well as the "Federal, State, and municipal officers who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty."

As we commemorate Peace Officers Memorial Day, it is vital for us to not only to honor the extraordinary work of our Nation's law enforcement professionals, but also to listen to their suggestions for how we can make our Nation a safer place to live. And on one subject, the overwhelming majority of

our Nation's law enforcement communities have been resolute and clear: Congress needs to support common sense measures, such as background checks for gun sales, to help stem the gun violence that plagues our Nation.

This is far from a revolutionary idea. Polls consistently show that approximately 90 percent of Americans support universal background checks. So do major law enforcement groups such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Police Executive Research Forum and the Police Foundation. These groups, each of them dedicated to the safety of our people, tell us that the time is now to act to prevent more senseless gun violence.

The extension of background checks to all gun sales would go a long way toward making our neighborhoods safer. Today, anyone, including convicted felons and the mentally ill, can walk into a gun show and walk out with a deadly weapon. As Police Chief Ronald Haddad of Dearborn, MI put it in a letter he wrote to me this past April, "Police see firsthand the toll that gun violence takes in our schools, on our streets, and among our fellow officers—and we know from experience that our broken gun laws are a significant part of the problem."

This status quo has dangerous consequences. A 2004 Department of Justice survey found that 80 percent of prisoners who committed crimes with handguns got them through private transfers, where no background check is required. In many of these cases, a simple background check could have stopped a tragedy and saved lives by keeping a weapon out of the hands of someone who sought to use it for harm. As Baltimore County Police Chief James Johnson put it at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing earlier this year, "The best way to stop a bad guy from getting a gun in the first place is a good background check."

We should listen to the voices of those entrusted with the safety of our communities. We should listen to the officers who every day confront well-armed criminals who legally purchase weapons to turn on innocents. We should live up to the spirit of Peace Officers Memorial Day by passing the Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act of 2013, a common sense piece of legislation to protect our society from more senseless gun violence. We owe the brave law enforcement professionals who keep our communities safe nothing less.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President. On June 16th, a group of World War II veterans

from Montana will be visiting our Nation's Capital.

With a great deal of honor and respect, I extend a hearty Montana welcome to each and every one of them.

Together, they will visit the World War II Memorial and share stories about their service. This journey will no doubt bring about a lot of memories. I hope it will give them a deep sense of pride as well.

What they achieved together almost 70 years ago was remarkable. That memorial is a testament to the fact that a grateful nation will never forget what they did or what they sacrificed. To us, they were our greatest generation. They left the comforts of their family and their communities to confront evil from Iwo Jima to Bastogne. Together, they won the war in the Pacific by defeating an empire and liberated a continent by destroying Hitler and the Nazis.

To them, they were simply doing their jobs. They enlisted in unprecedented numbers to defend our freedoms and our values. They represented the very best of us and made us proud.

From a young age, I remember playing the bugle at the memorial services of veterans of the first two World Wars. It instilled in me a profound sense of respect that I will never forget.

Honoring the service of every generation of American veterans is a Montana value. I deeply appreciate the work of the Big Sky Honor Flight, the nonprofit organization that made this trip possible.

To the World War II veterans making the trip, I salute you. We will always be grateful, and we will never forget your service or your sacrifice.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN SULLAM

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President; I rise today for a moment of bittersweet reflection and the celebration of a dedicated public servant who has contributed greatly to the State of Maryland and our entire Nation. June 21st marks the final day that Susan Sullam will be working in my office as my communications director. We've traversed a 27-year journey together that started when I was first running for the House of Representatives. Over the years, with a combination of her quick writing and single-minded determination, she has helped me find my voice and articulate my positions during the very best and the very worst of times for me and our country. She has been a friend, trusted counselor, and a part of my extended family.

As a former editor at Knight-Ridder with an interest in politics, Susan became one of my first and few campaign workers. She was instrumental in helping me win my first election to the U.S. House of Representatives. And when I took office, she became my first press secretary. Somehow, Susan managed to give 110 percent of herself to her family and to her job.

Throughout our time working together, I have had the privilege of

watching Susan's daughters, Jennifer and Karen, grow into remarkable, professionally accomplished young women. She instilled in her girls the understanding that you really could raise a family and have a career without shortchanging either one. I am forever grateful to them and Susan's husband Brian for sharing her time with me and the people of Maryland. I know Susan's family is looking forward to their first dinner without her BlackBerry.

I have always thought that Susan was born to be a journalist. Her mother, Mary Jane Fisher, was an admired and respected journalist and publicist who worked for 25 years as the Washington correspondent for the National Underwriter, a publisher of insurance and financial services trade publications. She was a well-known figure on Capitol Hill, and she frequented hearings of the Ways and Means Committee, where I served.

During one particularly memorable Medicare hearing, I watched from the dais as three generations of this wonderful family all worked the room. Mary Jane was reporting for her publication; Susan was covering the hearing as my press secretary; and Susan's daughter Jennifer was serving as an intern in the Ways and Means press office that summer, reporting to her boss, now-Representative DAN MAFFEI of New York.

Susan has been witness to the good and bad of politics over the course of nearly three decades. We started together at a time of great optimism that Congress could make decisions and enact meaningful legislation. Susan worked tirelessly during the many iterations of health care reform; she was constantly and meticulous pulling together materials that would help explain how real families would benefit from the passage of the legislation. This was as true in the 1990s with Hillary Clinton, as it was just a few years ago when we finally passed the Affordable Care Act. Her congressional career also encompassed my time as a member of the House Ethics Committee. During this period, Susan was witness to the various undertakings of the committee as it carried out its authorization to investigate violations of the House of Code of Official Conduct by Members and staff, investigations that included the "House Bank" and the Speaker of the House.

But Susan's career was so much more. As I pushed to reshape our retirement system, Susan was there every step of the way with an article, interview, or a cable show designed specifically to get out the word to people who could benefit from the proposed legislative changes.

Some moments we have shared together tested our Nation, as well as our professional relationship. We came together as a family during 9/11, watching our Nation as it was grievously wounded. I voted against giving President George W. Bush the power to send