

Special Olympics once said, "You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, and every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory."

Today, I would like to recognize a father and daughter who are sending their own message of hope and victory Mark and Michele Panozzo from Rockford, IL.

Last week, Michele Panozzo was recognized as the 2013 Outstanding Athlete Award by the Special Olympics of Illinois. Earlier this year, Michele and Mark Panozzo were both recognized as the Northern Illinois Special Olympics Athlete and Coach of the Year.

This father-daughter duo started their involvement in the Special Olympics more than 25 years ago when Michele, who has Down syndrome, was 8 years old. Her first sport was basketball. Over the years she has competed in a variety of sports, including softball throw, bowling and bocce.

Her dad, Mark, has been by her side as her coach the whole time. And it is not just Michele who Mark helps. He is also the coach of the Rockford Red Hots, a team of 45 Special Olympics athletes from the Rockford region. Mark and Michele spend nearly every weekend with the Red Hots, whether at a competition, a practice, or at social outings with teammates and their families.

Special Olympics is more than sports and competitions to Mark and Michele. It is a community that has welcomed and befriended them. Mark says he treasures Special Olympics because of the smiles he sees on Michele's face after a competition, whether she won a gold medal or finished last. Mark still proudly shows off a photo of the first time Michele competed in the Special Olympics; she was just 8 years old, her hair was in pigtails and her face was lit with excitement.

Mark has worked for the U.S. Postal Service for more than 30 years. Years ago he switched his schedule to work nights so he could pick up Michele from school every day. Michele volunteers 3 days a week delivering meals to home-bound seniors, helping at the food pantry and sorting clothes at the local donation center.

In July of 1968, the first Special Olympics Summer Games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago. Only one thousand athletes competed. Today, it is a growing, global movement in more than 170 countries, serving nearly 3.5 million athletes with intellectual disabilities. In Illinois, Special Olympics is making a difference in the lives of 21,000 athletes and nearly 40,000 volunteers and by organizing 170 competitions each year.

I join the Special Olympics of Illinois in commending Michele and Mark Panozzo for their dedication to Special Olympics. I am sure that Eunice Kennedy Shriver would be proud of what Michele and Mark have contributed to the Special Olympics community, and I am too.

TRIBUTE TO PIER ODDONE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, next month Piermaria Oddone will retire as the director of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, IL, after 8 years of service in that position. Pier has led Fermilab through some challenging times, but he has also led the lab to many remarkable achievements.

Pier was born in Peru and after earning degrees from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Princeton University, he worked at Caltech, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

Then in 2005, Pier and his wonderful wife, Barbara, moved to Fermilab, giving up the sunny west coast for cold Chicago winters. They arrived to 6,800-acres of former farmland that Pier and the Fermilab team have worked to restore to its native prairie. The laboratory maintains strong ties with the descendants of the farm families that once worked the land where Fermilab now sits, and every summer the families are invited to a picnic the lab hosts for the community.

No other national lab director can boast of barns and a herd of bison.

An avid photographer, Pier has spent many weekends walking the lab's grounds trying to capture its natural beauty through the lens. This is one of the things he has loved most about Fermilab. Whether raising bison or maintaining high-tech facilities, Pier has worked diligently to ensure that Fermilab continues to attract some of the best scientists from around the world.

And it does.

Today, Fermilab is America's premier particle physics laboratory, supporting thousands of scientists as they solve the mysteries of matter, energy, space, and time.

Fermilab's mission is to drive discovery in particle physics by building and operating world-class accelerator and detector facilities, performing pioneering research with global partners, and transforming technologies for science and industry.

It has often been said that physicists build huge, complex machines to study the tiniest, most basic particles. Well, Fermilab physicists build facilities and create new technologies to carry out discovery science and contribute to America's technology base.

During Pier's tenure as director, Fermilab launched a new era of scientific research focused on high-intensity particle beams through its cutting-edge muon and neutrino experiments.

Fermilab also pushed forward the world's understanding of the dark matter and dark energy that constitute 96 percent of the universe with its leadership roles in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey and the state-of-the-art Dark Energy Camera.

While this work was advancing, more than 100,000 students, from kindergarten through high school, were wel-

comed to the laboratory. Fermilab's strong partnership with Illinois schools and teachers helps achieve their shared goal of inspiring young people to learn more about particle physics, environment, ecology, and accelerator science—and ultimately encouraging them to pursue careers in STEM fields.

In addition, Fermilab's Tevatron particle collider laid the groundwork for the discovery of the Higgs particle last year by developing the technologies and analysis tools that helped confirm evidence of the Higgs boson's existence.

And though the Tevatron has ended its extraordinary 28-year run, under Pier's guidance Fermilab has maintained its position at the forefront of scientific research by serving as the U.S. hub for more than 1,000 physicists working at the Large Hadron Collider.

The laboratory contributed large magnets and other components key to the construction of the Large Hadron Collider and its experiments. Pier even created a control room at Fermilab so U.S. scientists can perform experiments at the Collider remotely.

In his last year as director, Fermilab partnered with the State of Illinois to construct the Illinois Accelerator Research Center, or I-ARC, which aims to accelerate the transition of technologies developed for particle physics research to other sectors of society.

I-ARC will also assist small businesses as a test facility, providing technical expertise in accelerator technology and serving as a training ground for the next generation of accelerator scientists and engineers.

Beyond the lab's accomplishments, Pier has been awarded many honors in his own right. He won the Panofsky Award of the American Physical Society for the invention of the Asymmetric B-Factory, a new kind of particle collider designed to study the difference between matter and antimatter. He is a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences. And, in case one was not enough, he also holds an honorary doctorate from the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Needless to say, it is likely that Pier's contributions to particle physics and to Fermilab will continue to benefit Illinois and the international research community long after he retires next month.

When asked what he plans to do upon his retirement, Pier talks about making wine on the vineyard he and his wife own in California.

At one point he even thought of this as a field of research at Fermilab. He would try planting grapevines at the lab, hoping that the heat from the beam lines would keep the vines warm enough to survive the winters. This way, the lab could make wine while unlocking the mysteries of the universe. It might not be a bad idea, but unfortunately he never had any time to test the experiment.

Now, after 8 years as director, Pier's wine-making skills may be a little rusty, but I am sure he will be back to harvesting his Cabernet and Zinfandel grapes in no time. And I am also sure that Pier and Barbara will find more time to spend with their 2-year-old granddaughter and the rest of their family.

On behalf of the people of Illinois and the global community of particle physicists, I thank Pier for his 8 dedicated years at Fermilab and congratulate him on his successful career. I wish him all the best in his retirement.

SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER REFORM ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I come to speak on S. 415, the "Small Business Disaster Reform Act of 2013." As Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, as well as a senator from a state hard hit by disasters, I am proud that yesterday our committee reported out S. 415 favorably on a bipartisan basis. In particular, Section 2 of S. 415 modifies the SBA requirement that borrowers must use their personal home as collateral for business disaster loans less than \$200,000. This is a very important provision for businesses impacted by natural and manmade disasters. For that reason, I want to provide additional information on the need to enact this provision.

In terms of the legislative history of Section 2, a similar provision passed the House of Representatives twice in 2009: on October 29, 2009 by a vote of 389-32 as Section 801 of H.R. 3854 and again by voice vote on November 6, 2009 as Section 2 of H.R. 3743. The same provision that is in S. 415 passed the Senate 62-32 on December 28, 2012 as Section 501 of H.R. 1, the Hurricane Sandy Supplemental. However, it was not included in H.R. 152, the House-passed "Disaster Relief Appropriations Act" that subsequently was enacted into law. Despite the setback earlier this year, I remind my colleagues that this provision has a history of bipartisan Congressional support and has previously passed both chambers of Congress.

This Congress, we also have significant bipartisan support. S. 415 has six cosponsors: Senators THAD COCHRAN, ROGER WICKER, HEIDI HEITKAMP, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, MARK PRYOR, and BEN CARDIN. The House companion to S. 415, H.R. 1974, was introduced by Representative PATRICK MURPHY last month and has 11 cosponsors: Reps. MICK MULVANEY, JUDY CHU, MIKE COFFMAN, TED DEUTCH, PETER KING, ALAN NUNNELEE, DONALD M. PAYNE, Jr., CEDRIC RICHMOND, TOM COLE, TREY RADEL, and FREDERICA WILSON.

While I understand the need to secure the loans and minimize risk to the taxpayers; SBA has at its disposal multiple ways to secure these loans. If business owners have literally lost everything, requiring a \$400,000 home as

collateral for a \$150,000 loan is maddening especially when other repayment options are available. One can understand that requirement for loans of \$750,000 or \$2 million. For the smaller disaster loans, however, it is a non-starter for many businesses we have heard from. The bill requires the SBA to seek other business assets—such as commercial real estate, equipment, or inventory—before requiring a primary residence be used as collateral.

I want to reiterate that Section 2 is very clear that these business assets should be of equal or greater value than the amount of the loan. Also, to ensure that this is a targeted improvement, the bill also includes additional language that this bill in no way requires SBA to reduce the amount or quality of collateral it seeks on these types of loans. I want to especially thank my former Ranking Member Olympia Snowe for working with me to improve upon previous legislation on this particular issue. The provision that I am re-introducing, as part of this disaster legislation, is a direct result of discussions with both her and other stakeholders late last year. I believe that this bill is better because of improvements that came out these productive discussions.

Furthermore, SBA has repeatedly said publicly and in testimony before my committee that it will not decline a borrower for a lack of collateral. According to a July 14, 2010 correspondence between SBA and my office, the agency notes that "SBA is an aggressive lender and its credit thresholds are well below traditional bank standards . . . SBA does not decline loans for insufficient collateral." SBA's current practice of making loans is based upon an individual/business demonstrating the ability to repay and income. The agency declines borrowers for an inability to repay the loan. In regards to collateral, SBA follows traditional lending practices that seek the "best available collateral." Collateral is required for physical loans over \$14,000 and Economic Injury Disaster Loans, EIDL, loans over \$5,000. SBA takes real estate as collateral when it is available, but as I stated, the agency will not decline a loan for lack of collateral. Instead it requires borrowers to pledge what is available. However, in practice, SBA is requiring borrowers to put up a personal residence worth \$300,000 or \$400,000 for a business loan of \$200,000 or less when there are other assets available for SBA.

This provision does not substantively change SBA's current lending practices and it will not have a significant cost. I believe that this legislation would not trigger direct spending nor would it have a significant impact on the subsidy rate for SBA disaster loans. Currently for every \$1 loaned out, it costs approximately 10 cents on the dollar. Most importantly, this bill will greatly improve the SBA disaster loan programs for businesses ahead of future disasters. If a business comes to the

SBA for a loan of less than \$200,000 to make immediate repairs or secure working capital, they can be assured that they will not have to put up their personal home if SBA determines that the business has other assets to go towards the loan. However, if businesses seek larger loans than \$200,000 or if their business assets are not suitable collateral, then the current requirements will still apply. This ensures that very small businesses and businesses seeking smaller amounts of recovery loans are able to secure these loans without significant burdens on their personal property. For the business owners we have spoken to, this provides some badly needed clarity to one of the Federal government's primary tools for responding to disasters.

To be clear though, while I do not want to see SBA tie up too much of a business' collateral, I also believe that if a business is willing and able to put up business assets towards its disaster loan, SBA should consider that first before attempting to bring in personal residences. It is unreasonable for SBA to ask business owners operating in very different business environments post-disaster to jeopardize not just their business but also their home. Loans of \$200,000 or less are also the loans most likely to be repaid by the business so personal homes should be collateral of last resort in instances where a business can demonstrate the ability to repay the loan and that it has other assets.

As I have mentioned, there are also safeguards in the provision that ensures that this provision will not reduce the quality of collateral required by SBA for these disaster loans nor will it reduce the quality of the SBA's general collateral requirements. These changes will assist the SBA in cutting down on waste, fraud and abuse of these legislative reforms. In order to further assist the SBA, I believe it is important to clarify what types of business assets we understand they should review. For example, I understand that SBA's current lending practices consider the following business assets as suitable collateral: commercial real estate; machinery and equipment; business inventory; and furniture and fixtures.

At our markup of S. 415 yesterday, there were concerns raised by some Minority members of our committee regarding the impact of this provision. One argument was that SBA has not seized many personal homes in the last five years. However, the SBA has been more aggressive since 2011 on foreclosures—sending out 113 foreclosure letters since then. This year alone they have seized 4 homes in Minnesota, Virginia, Illinois, and Texas. Furthermore, borrowers my office has spoken to are less concerned about a personal home being seized than they are about liens tying up personal property and the general roadblock this requirement