

when he was lost in a tragic plane accident in Alaska, she—unlike many—stepped up and into his shoes, trusting God to lead her forward.

She was elected to succeed her husband in Congress on March 20, 1973, and became the first woman elected to the House of Representatives from our State. At the time, there were only 15 women in the U.S. House of Representatives and none in the U.S. Senate.

But Lindy never let the novelty of this, the pressure of work and family, or any other challenge she faced throughout her career stand in her way or deter her from serving her State and her country.

Her keen political mind, iron will and graceful Southern charm helped her become one of the most formidable forces Congress has ever known. She was known for bridging the gap between Republicans and Democrats and convincing her colleagues to do what was right with poise, kindness and reason.

As her colleague Bill Frenzel, a Republican from Minnesota said of her: "It was impossible not to like Lindy. She liked everybody. She was nice to everybody. She achieved more with less huff and puff and bluster than any of the rest of us did."

She used her formidable influence to help lead the fight for civil rights, pay equity for women and the right for women to hold a mortgage on her own home without the necessity of a husband's signature.

As a member of the Banking Committee she inserted a provision barring discrimination over sex or marital status into the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974. She did not tell her colleagues before she did it and simply told them:

Knowing the members composing this committee as well as I do, I'm sure it was just an oversight that we didn't have 'sex' or 'marital status' included. I've taken care of that, and I trust it meets with the committee's approval.

There was no objection! And tens of millions of women were given access to credit, opportunity and a future of their own.

Lindy never tired in her fight to expand opportunities for women, whether it was helping women as candidates for public office at all levels of government, pressing Federal cabinet secretaries and agency heads to promote women to senior leadership and policy positions in government, supporting women that work two to three jobs to keep food on the table and a roof over their head or speaking out for victims of domestic violence.

In fact today, there is a place named "Lindy's Place" in New Orleans that carries on her work to support abused and battered women.

In 1976, she nominated a young woman from New Orleans to the U.S. Military Academy as soon as the Army dropped the gender bar, and then quickly nominated women to all four service academies. She applauded NASA when Sally Ride was the first fe-

male American astronaut to go into space. She knew women could really excel at anything whether it was on this planet or beyond.

Following her retirement from Congress in 1991, she once again answered the call to serve as the first female ambassador to the Holy See where she continued to exhibit the same strength, intelligence and respect that she was known for throughout her life. She was most certainly the only person to call the Pope "darlin'!"

Lindy's decades of service to her family, community, Nation and church reminds us all to give of ourselves fully to a worthy cause, and is an example of what we can achieve when we do. She has certainly set the gold standard for public service.

But knowing Lindy as well as I did, I believe she was most proud of her 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

As many of you know, the special cloakroom for the women of the House bears Lindy's name. A few months ago when we celebrated the 40th anniversary of Lindy's election, she said she was proud of that room, but that "Maybe, someday, the women will have to relinquish the room when women are the majority in the House."

I know that Lindy will be proud when women achieve this milestone. Even after that day comes, Lindy's legacy will continue to inspire us for many years to come.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM H. GRAY III

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, today I wish to honor and remember the full life of Congressman William H. Gray, III, and his exceptional service to his community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our country.

Bill was born in Baton Rouge, LA, the second child of Dr. William H. Gray, Jr., and Hazel Gray. Though he spent the first 8 years of his life in Florida, Bill moved to Philadelphia in 1949 and remained a distinguished resident of our Commonwealth until his recent passing.

Bill was a pastor and shepherd for his congregation, a respected member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and a powerful advocate for higher education. Today we honor his life, his good works, and his legacy.

As a pastor, Bill followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and led Philadelphia's Bright Hope Baptist Church for more than 33 years. Knowing that the ministry was not just something you did on Sunday morning, Bill always believed strongly in the principle of a "whole ministry," that the church must tend to all the needs of its entire congregation. Under Bill's leadership, that congregation quickly grew to over 4,000 parishioners, but Bill remained committed to his "whole ministry" and made sure to continue his important advocacy work on issues ranging from housing, to economic jus-

tice, to excellent education for all. Bill often said that his position as pastor of Bright Hope was the most important job he had ever had, one that cultivated the skills and priorities that shaped his life's work.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Bill proudly represented the Second District of Pennsylvania from 1979 to 1991 and built a reputation as a thoughtful and effective leader. Bill quickly rose through the ranks of leadership during his 12 years in Congress and assumed the chairmanship of the Budget Committee, after only 6 years in office. Three years later, in 1988, he was elected to chair his party's House caucus, and then in 1989 he became the House majority whip, the third-ranking leadership position in the House.

As a lifelong advocate for higher education, Bill chose to leave Congress at the pinnacle of his career to accept the position of president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund. He said at the time that "Woodrow Wilson used to say, 'My constituency is the next generation,' and you know, that's why I left Congress, because my constituency, really, is the next generation." Bill's 12-year tenure at UNCF brought unexpected growth in support for historically Black colleges, and he constantly sought innovative ways to both attract new investment and increase existing funding. By the time he left UNCF 12 years later, Bill and his team had raised more than \$1.54 billion.

Bill never rested and was never satisfied with one job at a time. While leading the UNCF, he was asked by President Clinton in 1994 to lead the efforts to restore democracy in Haiti. His work there earned him the Medal of Honor from the President of Haiti. In 2004, Bill started Gary Global Strategies, Inc., and served as a director on multiple corporate boards, including at Dell, JPMorgan Chase, and Pfizer. He also served as vice chairman for the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care and on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

Bill often said that he had "always been taught by my folk, parents, grandparents, that service is sort of the rent you pay for the space you occupy. And so, what I've tried to do is direct my life towards service based on faith and commitment, and social justice." As Bill's family and friends mourn his passing, I pray that they will be comforted by the knowledge that this great Nation will never forget the commitment Bill demonstrated to each of us, to his "whole ministry." May he rest in peace.

TRIBUTE TO BLAISE MESSINGER

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Blaise Messinger, Connecticut's 2013 Teacher of the Year.

Every year the Connecticut State Department of Education selects one teacher for this prestigious title who

then serves as an ambassador for education throughout the State and also represents Connecticut on a national scale, working on panels and advisory committees with other State teachers of the year, as well as with the National State Teacher of the Year Program and the U.S. Department of Education. This year's Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Blaise Messinger, was selected from 4 finalists, 15 semifinalists, and over 80 district teachers of the year for this tremendous distinction.

Mr. Messinger makes an extraordinary difference in the lives of his students and their families and at his school. He is an inspiration to his colleagues. At Woodside Intermediate School in Cromwell, CT, he is well known for his commitment to making fifth grade engaging and interesting. An actor in Los Angeles and New York City for many years, Mr. Messinger dedicates this thespian acumen and ability to his students' progress. By making school fun and relevant, his students remember what he teaches and come out of his classroom as enthusiastic learners. When addressing fellow educators as Connecticut Teacher of the Year, he advised his colleagues to "think back to that teacher you can still hear in your head." I am grateful that Mr. Messinger came to Connecticut to apply his talents, high energy, and positive spirit as a community leader.

One personal inspiration for Mr. Messinger's incredible impact as a teacher is his own family—especially his two sons, Ethan and Caleb, who live with him and his wife Kimberley in Cromwell. Mr. Messinger has said that his love for them—and his witnessing how teachers impacted their lives, especially his son Ethan who has autism—drives his desire to change the lives of children.

I thank the Connecticut State Department of Education and the National Teacher of the Year Program for representing the voices of passionate, talented teachers and recognizing their heroic efforts. Mr. Messinger has already done great work on a national level, sparking important discussions about changing the way we educate our future generations. I am very proud that he represents Connecticut as 2013 Teacher of the Year and invite my colleagues to join me in applauding his invaluable contributions to our country.

SYRIA

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I wish to speak about the crisis in Syria and the role that one company in one nation is playing in perpetuating the strife.

Every day Syria descends deeper into chaos and civil war. Since March 2011, more than 100,000 Syrians have been killed, an estimated 5 million have been internally displaced, and at least 1.6 million have fled their war-torn land. By the end of 2013, half of Syria's population may have left their homes.

The pressure on neighboring countries, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, is only increasing. Beyond the refugee crisis, the resulting chaos threatens unprecedented violence and instability for all of Syria's neighbors. As Syria's conflict grows increasingly radical, its borders are increasingly insecure.

In August 2011, now nearly 2 years ago, President Obama declared that Syria's dictator, Bashar Asad, had lost all legitimacy and "must go." At the time of that statement, the number of Syrians butchered by the Asad regime numbered a then-shocking 6,000. There were frequent grim comparisons to Bashar al-Asad's father Hafez, who shelled Hama for days in 1982, killing perhaps 20,000. Now, today we see a nation on a path to destruction and Hafez Asad's 20,000 dead is just a fraction of the number his son has killed.

America must take seriously its commitment to doing what it can to bring an end to the Asad regime. We must not tolerate the empowerment of forces antithetical to our interests. And we certainly must not be complicit in their behavior.

The triumph of the Asad regime would validate and encourage the murderous behavior of leaders who spurn democracy and the rule of law. It would empower the belligerent regime in Tehran and offer support to Iranian proxies who seek to annihilate Israel and ultimately threaten our own nation.

While we view the Asad regime with rebellion, some others have stepped up support for him, facilitating Asad's brutal success. Among these is the Government of Russia. Russia has demonstrated time and again its support for Bashar Asad and its opposition to our own humanitarian and democratic values.

Russia has consistently thwarted multilateral efforts to stem the violence in Syria, including vetoing a United Nations Security Council resolution that would have penalized Asad's failure to carry out a peace plan. It has made clear its unwavering support for Asad's brutality. Addressing the compounding challenges posed by Russian intransience has proven increasingly difficult. The Obama administration has made a serious effort to engage in a direct dialog over matters related to Syria, most recently along the sidelines of the G8.

But that effort has not been fruitful. Indeed, the Russian Government has demonstrated no genuine interest in achieving a resolution to the Syria conflict. Moscow appears to simply enjoy the political cover that U.S.-Russian talks provide. Russia remains unwavering in its support for an Asad regime that has hosted its bases, served Russian economic interests, and anchored what remains of Russia's influence in the region.

At the same time, Moscow continues to flout international norms. Russia is acting antagonistically toward our Na-

tion. It perpetuates human rights abuses at home. It sacrifices the well-being of Russia's orphans for the sake of political gains. And it is sheltering the fugitive Edward Snowden.

Russia's state-owned arms export firm, Rosoboronexport, has exacerbated the crisis in Syria. Instead of promoting a path to peace, Rosoboronexport has provided the Syrian Government with the means to perpetrate widespread and systemic attacks on its own people. It has supplied Asad with guns, grenades, tank parts, attack aircraft, anti-ship cruise missiles, and air defense missiles, which his regime in turn uses to perpetuate its rule and murder innocent civilians. Rosoboronexport also has made a commitment to provide Syria with S-300 advanced anti-aircraft missiles that would protect Syrian air dominance and facilitate its continued attacks on its civilian population.

These weapons do not threaten the Syrian people alone. They challenge American interests in the region, including the safety and security of Israel.

Let's look at one particular example that has received a good deal of international attention. It is certainly possible that NATO or our own Nation may decide it is necessary to create a no-fly zone over Syria to stop the carnage. Russian-provided S-300s would present a major threat to U.S. or allied aircraft and pilots seeking to establish such a zone. They would also pose a direct threat to Israeli civil and military air traffic.

The Russian transfer of weapons to Syria is not just inhumane, but it is a violation of U.S. law. The Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 and the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Accountability Act, as well as Executive Orders 13382 and 13582 all demand sanctions against "those entities that materially assist, or provide support for, the Government of Syria."

In addition, the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act prohibits contracts with Rosoboronexport, and section 1233 of S. 1197, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014, which was passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee, prohibits the use of funds to enter contracts with Rosoboronexport.

In light of the lack of progress of diplomatic efforts to end Russian support for the Asad regime and the direct nature of the threat these escalating arms sales pose, it is incumbent upon the U.S. Government to pursue more aggressive measures as mandated by U.S. law to create incentives for the Russians to change their behavior. Indeed, Senator KELLY AYOTTE and I have written to the President urging that he take this course.

With the exception of particular circumstances of true military necessity, the administration must end all financial dealings with Rosoboronexport and begin to impose sanctions against Rosoboronexport.