

Rockefeller	Tester	Warren
Sanders	Toomey	Whitehouse
Schumer	Udall (CO)	Wicker
Shaheen	Udall (NM)	Wyden
Stabenow	Warner	

NAYS—17

Barrasso	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Blunt	Lee	Sessions
Boozman	McCain	Shelby
Cornyn	Risch	Thune
Cruz	Roberts	Vitter
Enzi	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—9

Alexander	Crapo	Inhofe
Boxer	Graham	Kirk
Coburn	Hatch	Schatz

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ambassador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs).

Harry Reid, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher Murphy, Robert Menendez, Christopher A. Coons, Angus S. King, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Amy Klobuchar, Benjamin L. Cardin, Dianne Feinstein, Tom Udall, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Bernard Sanders, Barbara Boxer, Brian Schatz, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Thomas R. Carper, Michael F. Bennet.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, under the previous order the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ambassador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "nay" and

the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 273 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Brown	Kaine	Rockefeller
Cantwell	King	Sanders
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Landrieu	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Collins	Levin	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—36

Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rubio
Chambliss	Isakson	Scott
Coats	Johanns	Sessions
Cochran	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Corker	Lee	Thune
Cornyn	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

NOT VOTING—10

Alexander	Graham	McCaskill
Boxer	Hatch	Schatz
Coburn	Inhofe	
Crapo	Kirk	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 54, the nays are 36. The motion is agreed to.

NOMINATION OF ANNE W. PATTERSON TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ambassador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the provisions of S. Res. 15 of the 113th Congress, there will now be up to 8 hours of postcloture consideration of the nomination equally divided in the usual form.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it seems hard to believe that tomorrow will be the anniversary of the deaths of 20 little boys and girls in Newtown, CT. Not only those little boys and girls, but six educators, whose lives were taken by an unspeakable tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Their names are Allison, Avielle, Charlotte, Daniel, Olivia, Josephine, Ana, Dylan, Madeleine, Catherine, Chase, Jesse, James, Grace, Noah, Jack, Emilie, Caroline, Jessica, and Benjamin.

These little boys and girls were 6 and 7 years old. They were murdered. Although their years were few, their lives have touched and will continue to touch us all.

As it did a year ago, my heart goes out to the families of these little angels, and to all those affected by this tragedy. I honor the ultimate sacrifice of Victoria Soto, Dawn Hochsprung, Mary Sherlach, Lauren Rousseau, Rachel Davino, and Anne Marie Murphy—teachers and educators who died trying to safeguard the children in their care.

These six educators devoted their lives to teaching Newtown's children how to read and write, how to add and subtract, how to be good boys and girls, and how to grow into good men and women. They gave their lives to keep those children safe. They are a source of hope in a world that sometimes seems hopeless.

It is hard to comprehend the type of tragedy that occurred at Sandy Hook, let alone to recover from it. But I am inspired by the families in this community who have found purpose in the face of despair.

There is a Tibetan saying that says, "Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength."

The Dalai Lama says that whatever trouble you have experienced, and however deep your heartbreak, "If we lose our hope, that's our real disaster."

The families of Newtown have channeled their pain into activism, raising awareness about gun violence and mental health issues in this country.

I have met with them on a number of occasions, and their bravery in the face of such pain is truly an inspiration not only to me but to all of us.

I am proud of how hard my caucus fought this year to pass safeguards that would keep guns out of the hands of felons and people with severe mental illness. That is why 85 percent of the American people agree with us. Why should someone who has a severe mental illness or someone who is a criminal be able to purchase a gun? They shouldn't. Those who are trying to stop that legislation from going forward should be embarrassed and ashamed of themselves.

I personally am happy with my vote to keep military-style weapons off the streets and to improve our mental safety. But at a time when more than 30,000 Americans are killed by guns each year, it is shameful that the Senate can't pass gun safety legislation that would protect our most vulnerable citizens—our kids, our children, our babies.

So I told the families of the 26 innocents killed a year ago in Newton, and the 173 children killed by guns since December 14, 2012, that Senate Democrats will not give up on them, and that is still the fact. We will not give up on the victims of 26 school shootings that occurred since the Newtown massacre, including one in Sparks, NV, where a young man came with a gun. Who stepped forward to save the children? A teacher. He was killed. Two

others were injured in that assault. I will not give up on the families and friends of those gunned down at a movie theater in Colorado, a Sikh temple in Wisconsin, a shopping mall in Oregon, and every day on the streets of America's cities.

Last December I promised the families a meaningful conversation about how to change America's culture of violence. I want everyone within the sound of my voice to know that the conversation is not over.

The American people will prevail on this issue. When 85 percent of the American people believe in an issue—when 85 percent of the American people believe in not only an issue but in a quest, in fairness, it is going to happen. It is only a question of when it happens.

I urge the families and friends of those killed in Newtown to never lose hope. Never lose hope.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, John Adams, America's first Vice President—and second President—and whose bust sits right above us looking over the Senate every day, once said:

Facts are stubborn things. And whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.

It has been more than 3 years since President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. In that time, its opponents have made every effort to misinform the American public about this law and the vital benefits it provides the American people.

But as Adams said, facts are stubborn things, and I want to make sure the facts about the Affordable Care Act do not get lost amongst the criticism and false claims.

So here are the facts.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 100 million people have received free preventive care, more than 7 million seniors have saved nearly \$9 billion on prescription drugs, and 25 million people who lacked health insurance will finally be able to get the coverage they need.

The Affordable Care Act has also helped slow the growth in health care costs. National health care spending grew by 3.9 percent each year from 2009 to 2011—the slowest rate on record.

I can remember not too many years earlier the annual rate increase in health care costs was in the neighborhood of 6, 7, 8, 9 percent a year. It is a dramatic reduction.

That means we will save huge sums of money down the line. For example, the CMS projection of national health care expenditures in 2019 has dropped by \$574 billion in 3 years. That is \$574 billion in reduced projection of national health care costs in the year 2019.

While there is more than just the Affordable Care Act at work in those savings, it certainly has played a part.

The health insurance marketplaces are open for business, and every day we hear how the Web site healthcare.gov is working better. It is picking up steam. It is handling more and more consumers.

The New York Times reported on Tuesday that—and I am quoting—“the number of applicants who dropped a plan into their virtual grocery carts was climbing at a rapid clip.”

Those are the facts. The Affordable Care Act is helping millions of people. It is improving millions of lives.

But frankly, I think the American people are a bit tired of hearing politicians argue over the law. I am sure every one of my colleagues has spoken at length about it here on the Senate floor or back home. I know I have.

I think it is time to change the conversation. I think it is time to hear from the American people—hear from them—about how they think the law is helping them. I think it is time to hear what the New York Times called the “voices of quiet optimism and relief amid the uproar over the health law.”

Take these two stories.

Claire He is a college student whose parents have never been able to afford insurance. She and her brother lived most of their lives without coverage. She told the New York Times that if they got the flu “we just stayed home and waited it out.”

But when Claire and her family sat down to look at their options under the Affordable Care Act, here is what they found: They found a high-quality plan that will cost them only \$30 a month.

Claire said of the ACA's critics: “I see so much negativity behind this. . . . But in reality there's a lot of families who are like mine.”

Then there is the story of Bruce Kleinschmidt, a lawyer who lives in Louisville, KY. Bruce had insurance through his employer until he stopped working full time.

Bruce is 61—not yet eligible for Medicare. In another era, his health problems would have made it impossible for him to find insurance. But using Kentucky's new health marketplace, Bruce found a generous plan that saves him \$300 a month in premiums. Bruce called it a “godsend.”

There are hundreds of similar stories in newspapers all across the Nation—the San Jose Mercury News, the Las Vegas Sun, the Hartford Courant, the Palm Beach Post, the LA Times, and many more.

Not only do we read these kinds of personal stories in newspapers, we receive letters with them every day. Here are a few examples from letters I have received from Montanans.

John wrote to my office with his family's story. What did he say? John's daughter recently beat cancer. She is under age 26, so thanks to the Affordable Care Act she is still covered under her parents' insurance.

And there is more. When she does turn 26, she will have a guaranteed right to coverage. No insurance company can turn her away because she had cancer. John said they are counting on the Affordable Care Act to help them find an affordable plan.

Marge wrote to say that the Affordable Care Act has been an enormous relief for her. She has battled emphysema for years—despite the fact that she is not a smoker. A doctor once told her she could never leave her job because no one else would ever insure her.

So for Marge, the Affordable Care Act means she can breathe again—that she does not have to live in fear of losing her insurance or falling into bankruptcy because of her medical costs.

We all know—because many, many told us before the act—how many people went into bankruptcy because one of the leading causes of bankruptcy was health care costs.

Jillian wrote to say how excited she was to be able to shop for coverage in the marketplace.

Jillian is married, and she and her husband are expecting a child. But her husband's employer-sponsored plan does not pay for her coverage.

Here is what she wrote: “I am looking to make a more affordable choice for me and my baby-to-be. . . .”

Letters like these come in every day. They tell the stories of how the Affordable Care Act is working for them, it is helping them, and in the end that is what matters—not the punditry, not the polls, not the political points. What matters is that the law is improving the lives of millions of Americans.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATE RULES

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I have been engaged in the back-and-forth for many years concerning the rights of the minority to oppose legislation or nominations for Senate advice and consent, which, obviously, as we all know, is part of the Constitution of the United States.

After investing all of those hundreds of hours in compromises, both when Republican leadership wanted to act to curtail the rights of the minority and when Democrats were doing it—I fought hard. A short time ago Senator LEVIN and Senator SCHUMER and others changed the rules to try to expedite the consideration of legislation for a whole lot of reasons, including the fact

that a majority of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have never been here in the minority.

We have now acted in a draconian fashion and, in my view, have fundamentally, historically damaged this institution. Among other things, for the first time since the Senate has been a body, we have now changed the rules to 51 votes rather than 67. First time in history. Unfortunately, the repercussions will be that we are moving a step—a very significant step—toward a majority-rule body.

As my friend from Michigan Senator CARL LEVIN quoted Senator Vandenberg, a former Senator from Michigan and a highly regarded individual in this institution, we have now broken the rules to change the rules. On the night we changed the rules, I read a letter from Senator Robert Byrd—who was one of the most outstanding leaders and clearly the expert on the Constitution and this institution—cautioning against it.

The reason I come to the floor today is not so much to revisit that because it is done. I wish to point out that I see the first manifestation now of the majority-rule vote. I have been a member of the Homeland Security Committee, and I have been involved in these issues for many years. I was also involved in the so-called Gang of 8, where we came up with a comprehensive immigration reform bill which was passed through this body. We still hope that the other body will address, at least in some way, the issue of comprehensive immigration reform.

I come from a border State, as my colleagues know. Our border is not secure. In fact, the majority of drugs that still come across our southern border come across the Arizona-Sonora border in Mexico. My constituents, many who live in the southern part of the State of Arizona, have home invasions, people crossing their property. In one case a rancher was shot and killed, and a Border Patrol agent was killed. In fact, the reality is that they don't have the same security in the southern part of my State as the rest of our citizens do in other parts of the country.

Border security was a fundamental and vitally important issue in the hundreds of hours of debate and discussions that I and my seven colleagues engaged in as we shaped the comprehensive immigration reform legislation, which was largely passed intact in the Senate.

I went back to my constituents and I said there is a very vital and important provision in this bill; that is, when this legislation is passed, we will embark on the goal of achieving 90 percent effectiveness at our border. We can never get complete control of our border—we all recognize that—but 90 percent effective control through surveillance, through hiring new people, through capabilities that we have—we can achieve 90 percent effective control.

Then comes the nomination hearing of Mr. Jeh Johnson for Secretary of De-

partment of Homeland Security. I asked Mr. Johnson a simple, straightforward question. The question was: Mr. Johnson, when you are Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, will you provide this committee and me, Senator McCAIN, with a description of the measures that need to be taken in order for us to achieve what we have turned into legislation—at least in the Senate—90 percent effective control of our southern border?

His answer was no.

His answer, believe it or not, was no, that he could not provide that information. In fact, I was so astonished that I wrote him a letter and received a response, which I will read:

November 19, 2013.

Dear Senator McCAIN,

I regret that in my current posture as a nominee and private citizen, I am not now in a position to commit to provide the information you seek from the Department of Homeland Security.

At this point, I must respectfully refer you to the Department's current leadership. I know this was a matter of discussion between you and Secretary Napolitano, and I understand your frustration. As I believe I have demonstrated to you and others on the Senate and House Armed Services Committee—

Why he said Senate Armed Services Committee, I am not sure.

—I have a strong respect for Congress' oversight role. If I am confirmed, and if your request is still outstanding at that point, I promise that addressing your letter will be a top and immediate priority for me.

This is the November 19, 2013, letter from Mr. Jeh Charles Johnson.

In other words, the nominee for the Department of Homeland Security, who has direct responsibility for securing our borders, direct responsibility as outlined in legislation passed by this body, the comprehensive immigration reform bill, refuses to give me and this body the information. I hope there are other Senators who might be interested in what is necessary to achieve 90 percent effective control of our borders. He refuses to give me that information.

Thanks to the good offices of my beloved friend CARL LEVIN and my dear friend Senator CARPER, I just came from a meeting in my office with Mr. Jeh Johnson. Mr. Jeh Johnson again repeated to me that he could not give me the information of what is necessary, what tools are necessary to ensure 90 percent effective control of our border.

Allegedly, he is being prevented from doing that by the White House. It is stunning. Why would the White House prevent the nominee for Secretary of Homeland Security from providing this to Members of the Senate and members of the committee that has oversight of homeland security, which is fundamental information if we are going to achieve effective control of our border?

I go home to Arizona and I say: Yes, it is in the law, my friends. It is in the law that we are going to have to get 90 percent effective control of our border,

but I don't know how we do it because the agency that will be required to do it will not give me the necessary information to do it.

My friends, we will voting on Monday to confirm Mr. Johnson. He will be confirmed. There is no doubt about it now that we have majority vote. We have now deprived Republicans of their advice and consent responsibilities and authority. We have not only changed the rules of the Senate, we have abridged the Constitution of the United States because the only way that I could have received this information from Mr. Johnson was if I had said: I can't approve of your nomination until you provide the information which, by any objective observer, I am entitled to—not only entitled to; it is my responsibility to know that. It is my responsibility. That is why we have a committee. That is why we have a committee, the homeland security committee, that has oversight of the functions of the executive branch. That is how equal branches of government are supposed to function.

Mr. Johnson will be confirmed, and the message will go out, believe me: You don't have to answer a question by a Republican Senator. You don't have to respond to a straightforward question.

There was nothing devious about the question I asked Mr. Johnson. There was nothing complicated. They certainly should have the information of what steps and measures are necessary to ensure 90 percent effective control of our border—which is a requirement in the law, if it is ever passed. Certainly the requirement was passed by the Senate.

It is kind of a sad day. It was a sad day for me when we changed the rules. It was a sad day for me to see people who have been here a very short period of time basically shatter the comity which exists and which is vital to doing business in the Senate.

I also would point out to my colleagues—particularly those who are new and who drove this change in the Senate rules—what goes around comes around and what goes around will come around. To their deep regret, some day—I say to the President and I say to my colleagues who voted for it on a party-line vote, for the first time in history changing the rules of the Senate from 67 votes to 51 votes—they will regret it.

The people who will suffer greatly from this are the American people because this place is largely dysfunctional anyway. If we think it was dysfunctional before, wait and see. I say that with deep regret because I value and treasure my relationships with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Some of the best friends I have are on the other side of the aisle. But to expect to do business as usual when I can't even get a straight answer for a question that—now by not having the answer inhibits and in many ways prohibits my ability to respond and carry

out my responsibilities to the citizens of my State—cannot go without being responded to.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I now yield back all time on the Patterson nomination.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I was unable to attend the rollcall vote on the nomination of Heather Anne Higginbottom to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources and the rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Anne W. Patterson to be an Assistant Secretary of State. Had I been present for these two votes, I would have voted "aye."

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent 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 GREG JONES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I come to the floor today to recognize the retirement of an upstanding citizen from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and to pay tribute to his career of service to my home State. This month, Greg Jones concludes over 21 years as executive director of the non-profit Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation, SKED. His daily presence at the helm of the organization will be sorely missed, but his legacy will endure in the thousands of jobs he helped create and the increased economic vigor he helped bring to the region.

When he first took the job at the behest of Congressman HAL ROGERS in 1992, Greg oversaw a two-person staff and commanded a \$75,000 budget. Under his leadership the organization has grown to its current staff of 10 professionals and a budget of nearly \$2 million. Throughout his tenure as executive director, Greg marshaled SKED's resources to help start and expand businesses, provide training for entrepreneurs, and attract new industries to the corporation's 45-county service area. Under Greg's watch, SKED has unquestionably lived up to its stated mission—"to foster economic growth and vitality in the region."

I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing Greg's exemplary career as well as wishing him a happy re-

tirement with his wife Belinda and son Christopher.

An article about Greg Jones's retirement from SKED recently appeared in an area newspaper, the Commonwealth Journal. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objections, the article was ordered to be printed as follows:

SKED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREG JONES
RETIRING IN DECEMBER

[From the Commonwealth Journal,
Oct. 13, 2013]

SOMERSET, KY.—Greg Jones, executive director of Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), will retire in December after more than 21 years of service to the nonprofit organization and to Southeast Kentucky.

The longest serving executive director in the organization's 27-year history, Jones is credited with strengthening SKED's mission of job creation and making it the premier economic development agency in the region. Beginning with a \$75,000 budget and two-person staff in 1992, Jones and his current staff of 10 professionals now operate with an annual budget of nearly \$2 million.

"I've had the privilege to lead SKED and our amazing team of professionals for over two decades, and I am extremely proud of our successes," Jones said. "I shall forever be grateful to Congressman Hal Rogers and the incredibly supportive and talented individuals on the SKED Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this remarkable organization. And, finally, I wish to thank the dedicated staff of SKED for their loyalty and friendship over these many years."

It was Congressman Rogers who asked Jones to head up the grassroots effort he began, in 1986, back in 1992. At the time, Jones was working as executive director of the Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce.

"Over the last two decades, Greg Jones has worked tirelessly to recruit thousands of jobs and expand the industrial portfolio of southern and eastern Kentucky," said Rogers. "Greg's foresight to address vital infrastructure upgrades, recruit high-tech companies and support entrepreneurial growth will continue to benefit economic development in our region for years to come. While he is moving on from daily operations at SKED, I have asked Greg to remain in close contact to offer guidance for the organization that he has helped mold for success. My wife Cynthia and I wish Greg and his family many blessings in his years of retirement."

As SKED executive director, Jones has been responsible for the marketing and industrial recruitment activities for the 45-county SKED service area, managing a \$10-million loan portfolio and providing economic and community development assistance to local communities in Southeast Kentucky.

Under his leadership, SKED has successfully assisted more than 100 businesses and industries in starting or expanding their operations in the region. These companies now employ more than 7,700 workers and have invested an estimated \$500 million in Southeast Kentucky. He has successfully prepared loan and grant applications totaling more than \$26 million to support the organization's job creation activities.

Building partnerships has been Jones's mantra for the past 21 years. Whether it was with local community leaders or state and national funding agencies, Jones worked tirelessly to form strong alliances across the

region, state and nation. One of those key partnerships is with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Earl Gohl, ARC federal co-chair, has worked with Jones on several key projects in recent years.

"Greg's leadership has made SKED what it is today," Gohl said. "What he has accomplished with the SKED entrepreneurship program and the Valley Oak Technology Complex has laid the groundwork for what Eastern Kentucky can be tomorrow."

Jones led SKED to receive designation as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in 1999. As a result, the organization received funding to implement several innovative regional projects including the Valley Oak Technology Complex, the Somerset Rail Park, the Southern Kentucky Information Technology Center and the Enterprise Center.

SKED received the National Association of Development Organization's (NADO) 2002 Innovation Award in recognition of its technology initiatives.

In 2009, SKED became a Certified Development Corporation (CDC) by the U.S. Small Business Administration. This designation authorized SKED to process SBA 504 loans throughout the state of Kentucky. The 504 Loan Program is the SBA's economic development tool to provide small-business financing and create jobs all across America.

To date, some 250 people have received entrepreneurial training from SKED thanks to a grant from the ARC in 2011. SKED established the Entrepreneurial SMARTs program designed to offer nationally acclaimed entrepreneurship classes at a reduced rate. A CDFI grant provided the funding to hire a professional to teach the classes.

SKED is governed by a 12-member, volunteer board of directors. Over the past 21 years, Jones has worked with a number of successful men and women on the board, each with different areas of expertise and from a variety of career fields, but all leaders in their own communities. As board members, they share SKED's mission of job creation in Southeast Kentucky.

SKED President Tim Barnes is one of those community leaders. President and CEO of Hometown Bank, he's led the SKED Board of Directors for the past three years.

"Greg has been the face of SKED for so long, it's hard to imagine ever being able to replace him," Barnes said. "Let's just say there will be no replacing Greg. He's one of a kind. His legacy of caring professionalism will live on through the lending programs and other initiatives he's worked so tirelessly to develop over the past two decades. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors, and speaking on behalf of all board members past and present, I say a hearty thank you."

The SKED Board of Directors plans a national search for Jones's successor.

A native of Laurel County, Jones has served on numerous boards and commissions both locally and nationally. These positions include being past president of the Appalachia Development Alliance. He is currently on the board of directors for both TOURSEKY and the National Institute for Hometown Security. He was named East Kentucky Power Community/Economic Development Professional of the Year in 2007.

He earned his B.S. in industrial technology at Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky. He also holds a master of public administration degree from Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville. He also attended the Institute for Organization Management and Economic Development Institute.

In 1995, he received the Certified Economic Developer designation from the American Economic Development Council.