

her family may not be with her any longer.

Stories such as Angie Cain's story, the story of Sara Wolff, and individuals across the country like Sara and Angie are the reason we have to pass the ABLE Act. They don't need a lot of help. They need just a tool, one tool in their toolbox, to be able to reach down and have the opportunity to have their families save in a way that will help them down the road.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 19 percent of Americans live with one or more disabilities, 12 percent live with severe disabilities, and many of them are unsure about their ability to cover their basic expenses in the future because they are unable to build adequate savings.

We talk a lot about how folks should save. We encourage people to save for college. We encourage families to do that, and we encourage people to save for all kinds of things. Just the principle itself—to save and to conserve—is a good one to espouse and to advocate. But we have to give, in this instance, families an opportunity to save for a loved one with a disability or, in some cases, more than one disability. So whether it is Sara Wolff or Angie or others, we have to give them an opportunity to do that and give their families that opportunity.

When you see that number of Members of Congress—400—coming together, I believe it is not simply a question of whether this will pass but only a question of when the ABLE Act will pass. I hope that will take place in the next couple of months and that we can get every single Member of the Senate and House to join us.

This is one major thing we could do this year to show the American people we get it when it comes to one challenge that a lot of families face.

TRIBUTE TO BETSY SCHMID

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 13 months ago, I inherited an awesome responsibility. In the blink of an eye, I had become Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, a position long held by Senator Daniel Inouye.

It was daunting to step into the shoes of a member of the "greatest generation," a Medal of Honor recipient, and one of the most respected advocates for the men and women who serve our country in uniform. It was my good luck that the gavel I inherited came with Betsy Schmid, the staff director of the subcommittee.

Betsy first came to the Senate in February 2002, on detail to the Defense Subcommittee as a Presidential management intern. While it was only a temporary assignment, I believe Betsy would be the first to tell you that she would have done anything to return.

Return she did, joining the Defense Subcommittee as professional staff in March 2003. Over the next 8 years,

Betsy served as a budget analyst focusing on some of the largest, most complex, and politically sensitive programs in the Department of Defense.

After years as an outstanding budget analyst, Chairman Inouye appointed Betsy to serve as the staff director of the Subcommittee on Defense in February 2011. It is a daunting job. The subcommittee oversees more than half of the Nation's discretionary budget, plus tens of billions more for the costs of overseas conflicts.

As staff director, Betsy has done an outstanding job of serving me this year, and Senator Inouye before me. But more importantly, her time here was in service to the Senate, the Nation, and our Armed Forces.

During her service, she had been handed the unenviable task of reducing the defense budget by scores of billions of dollars.

Many said that the cuts could not be made without sacrificing major critical military capabilities, but Betsy and her staff proved them wrong. Betsy made the numbers work, and there is no doubt in my mind that our Nation is more secure today because we got many of these budgetary decisions right.

This is Betsy Schmid's last week with the Subcommittee on Defense. She has been given an offer that she simply could not refuse. I wish her well and know she will contribute in important ways, but we will miss her.

During her service in the Senate, she has continued the tradition of bipartisanship and putting the men and women of the Armed Forces and Intelligence Community first. No one has worked harder to achieve these goals, working late nights, weekends, and more than a few holidays to serve her country to the utmost of her considerable abilities.

So with this distinguished record of public service, I would like to provide my sincere thanks and congratulations to Elizabeth Lynne Schmid. I wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of Black History Month.

First established in 1976 as part of the U.S. Bicentennial, President Gerald Ford marked the inaugural Black History Month with a call to "honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history."

The State of Illinois has played a significant role in this ongoing struggle for justice. President Abraham Lincoln led our Nation through its bloodiest war to save the Union, abolish slavery, and begin the work we continue to this day to end discrimination.

It was Illinois Senator Paul Douglas who raised the Illinois standard and joined in lending support for Hubert Humphrey's call for civil rights at the 1948 Democratic Convention. Douglas

was a stalwart on civil rights as a Senator, defying filibusters and the wrath of his colleagues to make this principled stand in the 1950s and 1960s.

It was Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen who worked with Members of both parties to help pass the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 50 years ago this July. That Dirksen Senate seat would later be filled by three of the nine African-American Senators who have served in this body—more than any other State in the Nation.

In 1992, Carol Moseley Braun became the first and only African-American woman to serve in the Senate. In 2004, I was joined here in the Senate by Barack Obama, who would of course go on to become the first African-American President in American history. Roland Burris assumed his seat when President Obama moved into the White House.

The Senate has since welcomed Senators TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, Mo Cowan of Massachusetts, and CORY BOOKER of New Jersey. This 113th Congress marks the first time that two African-American Senators served concurrently.

The Senate is changing to better reflect the diversity of this Nation, but the pace of that change is painfully slow. Our challenge is to shape a nation where America's leaders look like America and where the talents of all people are welcomed.

We proudly celebrate the tremendous work of the courageous men and women who have come before us to make this country a better place. During this month, as we do throughout the year, America continues to fight so that we may all live in a fairer and more equal nation.

SENATE EMPLOYEES' CHILD CARE CENTER

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I wish to recognize the 30th anniversary of a special place in our Senate community—the Senate employees' childcare center. The teachers and administrators at the center are some of the unsung heroes of the Senate, and it is a privilege to be able to pay tribute to them today.

The Senate employees' childcare center opened its doors on February 27, 1984, as the result of a small group of Senate employees who came together as parents to create a childcare program for their children that would best meet the unique needs of Senate employees. Although operating out of different buildings, the center has been in continuous operation since its opening day. In 1989, the center became the first childcare center in Washington, DC, to receive accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children—a hallmark of quality in the child care world—and it has remained accredited ever since.

Over the years the center has grown in size and has moved locations several times, but one thing that has never

changed is the center's commitment to excellence. Through the dedicated efforts of its administrators and faculty, the center provides an exceptional level of care and a top-notch early childhood education program. While adhering to rigorous standards, the center also remains a warm and close-knit community. It is now a separate nonprofit governed by a parent board of directors, and all of the parents regularly donate their time and their energy—from organizing the center's library to washing crib sheets and blankets—to ensure that the center runs smoothly. It is a place where everyone knows every child's name and where children rush in the doors in the morning with smiles on their faces because they know they are going to a place where they will be welcomed, where they will learn, and where they will be loved.

That loving environment is provided by the people who are truly the heart of the Senate childcare center—its teachers. Childcare workers perform some of the most difficult and most important jobs in our society. Their job is far more than feeding, diapering, and keeping children safe. They help develop young minds in the earliest, most critical developmental years. Childcare workers don't do their jobs for the money, and they often don't get the respect they deserve. They do their jobs because they love children and they love being a part of watching them grow.

The center is blessed with a particularly exceptional faculty—many of the teachers have been there for decades. They have watched the children they have cared for grow up, go to college, get married, and have children of their own, and they are still there with open arms and loving hearts for the next generation of children that walk through the door. Though they are not technically public employees, there is no doubt that they are dedicated public servants who make an invaluable contribution to the Senate community.

I want to particularly recognize a few of the most longstanding faculty members at the center. Phyllis Green, the lead teacher in the center's toddler room, has been with the center all 30 years of its operation. Parents describe her as a warm, steady, and nurturing presence, who has helped countless children discover the world and gain new skills and new independence. Anyone who can spend 30 years with toddlers is truly a remarkable individual, and I applaud "Ms. Phyllis" for her years of service. Other teachers with longstanding service include the center's beloved assistant director, Bridgette Waters, who is marking her 20th year this year, teachers Janet Green-Tucker, Joan Middleton, Michelle Buckner, and Rosa Woodard, each of whom has served, or will soon serve, 20 years or more with the center, and teachers Pia Corona, Tangela Cassell-Johnson, Andrea Henriques, Kellie Salley, and Mishele Torbati,

each of whom has served, or will soon have served, 10 years or more.

I would also like to recognize the 9 years of service provided by the center's departing director, Christine Schoppe Wauls, who will leave our community at the end of the month to enjoy her well-deserved retirement. Christine, thank you for your years of service to the Senate community. Indeed, the entire faculty and staff of the center deserve our respect and gratitude for the important work that they do each day.

I have often said that when a staffer signs up to work for the Senate, their whole family really signs up for public service. Senate families make many sacrifices so that a parent—or sometimes both parents—can serve the Senate. For the parents who send their children to the Senate childcare center, the difficult balancing act of work and family is made just a little bit easier.

It is a great comfort to Senate staffers to know that their children are in such wonderful care. It is a great comfort to us as Senators to know that our staff can do their jobs well without worrying about their children's safety and well-being. We would be a better country if every working American could have the same kind of security and peace of mind when they go to work each day.

So on this, the 30th anniversary of the Senate employees' childcare center, I offer my congratulations to the center for achieving this important milestone and my very best wishes for many more years of service.

TRIBUTE TO SETH HARRIS

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the former Deputy Secretary of Labor, Seth Harris, who recently left the Department after nearly 5 years of service. In his time serving as both Deputy Secretary and Acting Secretary, Seth was an invaluable asset to the Department. He brought to these positions a deep knowledge of both the agency and labor law, and he made significant contributions to the Department both as a manager and as a policy expert. Perhaps most important, he brought to these positions the lifelong passion for helping working families succeed that has been the hallmark of his impressive career.

Indeed, this was not Seth's first stint at the Department of Labor. He served for 7 years at the Department during the Clinton Administration, under both Secretaries Robert Reich and Alexis Herman. During this time, he served as counselor to the Secretary of Labor and as Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, among other roles. He then moved to the academy, where he served as a professor of law at the New York Law School and director of its Labor & Employment Law Programs. While teaching at the New York Law School, his scholarship often focused on a law

that is particularly close to my heart—the Americans with Disabilities Act. While teaching, Seth was also a Senior Fellow at the Life Without Limits Project of the United Cerebral Palsy Association, and was a member of the National Advisory Commission on Workplace Flexibility. When President Obama took office, Seth again answered the call to serve his country, and was confirmed as the eleventh United States Deputy Secretary of Labor in May of 2009.

I can understand why he wanted to return to the Department. As I have said on more than one occasion, of all the executive agencies, it may be the Department of Labor that touches the lives of ordinary working Americans the most on a day-to-day basis. The Department of Labor ensures that every American receives a fair day's pay for a hard day's work, and can come home from work safely each night. It helps ensure that a working mother can stay home to bond with her newborn child and still have a job to return to. It helps workers who have been laid off, veterans returning from military service, young people with disabilities entering the workforce and those who develop disabilities and are trying to reenter the workforce—it helps all of these workers to build new skills and aspire to better opportunities for the future. In addition, the Department helps guarantee that hard-working people who have saved all their lives for retirement can enjoy their golden years with security and peace of mind.

Yet, despite this important mission, it is safe to say that when Seth and the current leadership team arrived at the Department, it was an agency suffering from significant neglect. Enforcement activity was down. Vital regulations to protect workers had been weakened or repealed. The agency faced significant management challenges. Not surprisingly, the morale of the agency's career staff was low.

It has been heartening to see this critical agency revitalized under the Obama administration. Enforcement statistics are improving. More workers are getting better training so they can find better jobs. Employee morale at the agency is improving. In short, the Department of Labor is doing what it is supposed to be doing, and doing it well. As Deputy Secretary—the official responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Department—Seth Harris played a key role in helping the Department meet these challenges.

In a message to Department staff upon his departure, Seth shared some of the agency's accomplishments over the last 5 years. I wanted to include this list in the RECORD, because it is an impressive array of achievements. To quote his message:

Last year, we achieved the lowest workplace fatality rate for miners, the fewest number of miners dying in workplace accidents, and the fewest workplace injuries in