

providers in dental health professional shortage areas—HPSA—by offering incentives in the form of scholarships and loan repayments to primary care dentists and registered dental hygienists to practice in underserved communities. The Corps has awarded more than 1,100 new loan repayment awards to dentists and nearly 300 new loan repayment awards to registered dental hygienists. But this is not nearly enough to erase the shortages. The NHSC has also implemented a part-time service program for providers who did not wish to make a full-time commitment, and I am hopeful that this new option will increase participation in the coming years.

Our Nation has made significant progress in improving children's dental health in the 7 years since Deamonte died, but there is still much work to be done. The access problem in some communities has become so severe that many people are forced to seek treatment for tooth pain in the Nation's emergency rooms, increasing the overall cost of care and receiving uncoordinated care in the least cost-efficient setting. In fact, more people seek treatment in emergency rooms for tooth pain than they do for asthma.

I will continue to work to increase funding for grants to States and expand training opportunities for dentists. We do not have enough professionals who are trained and available to treat children and adults with dental problems, and it is our responsibility to fix that. We must improve public reimbursement to dental providers in offices and clinics so that no one who needs treatment will be turned away.

Soon, Congress will turn again to the Reauthorization of the CHIP program, and I will be once again fighting for the strongest possible language we can get to promote children's oral health. For my colleagues who may not be familiar with CHIP's track record on oral health, I would like to leave you with three facts:

First, tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease of childhood, and it is five times more common than asthma. The complications of dental disease, which we now know can be fatal, are completely and easily preventable if we give children the care they need. Second, because of Congress's passage of the 2009 Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, in 2013, more than 8 million American children had comprehensive dental coverage through CHIP. Third, CHIP has kept comprehensive coverage affordable. Under CHIP, families cannot pay more than 5 percent of their annual income in out-of-pocket costs for their children's medical and dental care.

What we have been able to achieve for children is due to support in Congress and also to the efforts of the many nonprofit organizations, universities, and providers who are also working across the Nation to make sure

that we will never forget Deamonte and never forget our responsibility to improving oral health care for America's children.

On this sad anniversary, in Maryland and throughout the Nation there are signs of hope for the future of oral health care. I thank my colleagues for the role they have played in this process and look forward to working with them in the months to come to strengthen oral health care access for our Nation's children.

TRIBUTE TO ANTONIA FERRIER

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to Antonia Ferrier on my staff. After 4 years of trying to keep this tough old bird in line, she'll be leaving my office in the coming days. She will most certainly be missed.

Antonia first came to Capitol Hill to work for the former distinguished majority leader and my good friend, Bill Frist from Tennessee. After that, she went on to serve on the staff of another one of our former colleagues, Olympia Snowe. Now, Maine is pretty different from Tennessee, but I'm sure it felt like a bit of a homecoming for Antonia, who is from Massachusetts. After more than 3 years with Senator Snowe, Antonia made her way across the Capitol Rotunda to work for Senator ROY BLUNT during his time as the House Republican Whip.

For a Senate purist like Antonia, one House Member probably felt like enough, but she then went on to serve JOHN BOEHNER during his time as the House Republican leader. Finally, we were able to woo her back on this side of the Capitol to come be a member of our team.

As I said, Antonia is a Senate purist. She understands the Senate's role in our system of government, she appreciates the personalities and complexities of those that are honored to serve here, and she knows how much the work we do here impacts the lives of Americans from Tennessee to Maine, and Ohio to Utah. And, given her experience, she understands the House very much as well.

I'll deeply miss having Antonia around, not only for her sage advice and counsel, but also for her wit and sense of humor, and her willingness for straight-talk. I think she would say that the hardest part of her job is protecting me from myself. That's a tough job for anyone. And, I have to say that she's been up to the task, even during those times when I've made it particularly difficult.

I want to thank Antonia for her service to me, to Utah, and to the Senate over these last several years. She has been an amazing asset, and I wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

REMEMBERING JOHN S. WILLIAMS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President. I am grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute to a truly extraordinary public

servant, father, grandfather, and neighbor—Mr. John S. Williams. Sadly, John passed away this week leaving behind a legacy of dedication and service.

John worked for an unprecedented 27½ years as the executive director of the Five County Association of Governments, AOG; only the third person to serve in that position since the association's inception. This association was formed to address the needs and challenges facing the southwest region of Utah—Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, and Washington Counties. As the director, John set a tone of hard work, commitment, and a belief in the greatness of southwest Utah. He was comfortable not only in the director's chair—but rolling up his sleeves and getting the hard work done.

He was a key figure in promoting economic development in southwest Utah, as well as the whole State. He helped formulate policy and address issues facing an increasingly expanding region including: infrastructure, public lands issues, population growth, and quality of life. The Five County AOG has a reputation throughout Utah as an association that makes a difference and helps forge the way, largely in part because of the strength of John's leadership for almost three decades.

While working with John on many occasions throughout my Senate service I have always found him as someone who deeply cared about those he served, and had ideas and solutions to address the challenges facing a very important region of Utah. The example he set will be felt for generations to come; and the five counties he served are better prepared for the future challenges and triumphs they will face in the coming years.

Elaine and I convey our deepest sympathies to John's wife Jamie, his five children, and many grandchildren. May our Heavenly Father bless them with peace and comfort at this time. The contributions and impact John made on his family, his community, and our State will be felt and appreciated for generations to come. Utah is a better State because of the service John rendered throughout his life and his strong advocacy of southwest Utah.

FREEDOM FOR BOB LEVINSON

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I rise today on the anniversary of Bob Levinson's disappearance from Kish Island off the coast of Iran.

March 9 will mark 7 excruciating years of waiting and wondering for Bob's family who have desperately sought assistance from the Governments of Iran and the United States in finding him and bringing him home.

Bob, a retired FBI agent, is now one of the longest held Americans in our Nation's history. Bob's safe return is his family's highest priority—as it must remain for the U.S. Government as well.

At the beginning of this year, this body unanimously passed a resolution

urging the Government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance in Bob's case. At a time when our governments are talking to one another after more than 30 years, I ask that they talk about locating Bob and bringing him home to Florida. This case transcends any differences between the United States and Iran.

I continue to believe our two countries share the same goal: as a humanitarian matter both governments can readily support bringing a father home to his children and grandchildren.

I have said as much to officials in the Iranian Government, and I rise today to reiterate this same message. I will also continue to call on the U.S. Government to raise Bob's case with Iranian officials at every opportunity and do all they can to end this ordeal.

Bob and his wife Christine have seven children and four grandchildren.

For their sake, after 7 heart-wrenching years, we must all redouble our efforts to bring Bob home.

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, this year marks the 175th anniversary of the incorporation of Aroostook County, ME. As one who was born and raised in that wonderful place, I wish to celebrate its fascinating past, energetic present, and bright future.

If the story of Aroostook County could be summed up in one thought, it would be this: We are the largest county east of the Mississippi River, yet we are all neighbors. From the frontier to the front lines of innovation, the people of "The County," as it is known throughout Maine, have always worked hard and worked together.

The story of Aroostook County begins long before its incorporation in 1839. For thousands of years, it has been the home of the Micmac and Maliseet; the name Aroostook comes from the Native American word for "beautiful river."

French explorers, led by Samuel de Champlain, first visited the area in 1604. The settlements that followed laid the foundation for the vibrant Acadian culture that is so important in Maine, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and as far away as Louisiana. Under French, and later, English rule, Aroostook's rich natural resources drew hardy lumberjacks and trappers to the area.

For decades after the American Revolution, Maine's northernmost region was the site of a protracted and tense border dispute between our new Nation and British Canada. As negotiations, led by the great American statesman Daniel Webster, to end what is now called the Bloodless Aroostook War neared completion, families and entrepreneurs settled in the area, and Aroostook County was incorporated. Among those early settlers was my ancestor, Samuel W. Collins, who built a lumber mill in Caribou in 1844 that was the beginning of our fifth-generation family business still in operation today.

People were drawn to Aroostook County in search of liberty and opportunity, and they have always worked and sacrificed to extend those blessings to others. In the years before emancipation, Aroostook County was the last stop on the Underground Railroad that took slaves to freedom. The Friends Quaker Church in Fort Fairfield stands today as a powerful memorial to that time of courage and compassion. Civil War monuments in villages throughout Aroostook County stand in honor of the many heroes who gave their lives so that all could be free.

Throughout the 19th century, the people of Aroostook County connected their remote region to the world with their own hands. Town by town, they built roads and railroads with pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow. These transportation networks, combined with the region's rich soil, made Aroostook County an agricultural powerhouse. The potato industry remains an essential part of the Maine economy.

During World War II, Presque Isle and Houlton both had U.S. Army bases. Houlton had a prisoner-of-war camp for German soldiers. Presque Isle's base was used to launch P-38s, C-47s, and B-17s to the European theater. During the cold war, Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, due its proximity to Northern Europe, became a crucial forward post in America's defense.

The closure of Loring Air Force base in 1994 was a difficult challenge. But the people of Aroostook County responded with the qualities that wrote their history: strength, a strong work ethic, and determination. They are building a new economy with new jobs and opportunities. Back then, biathlon was little-known, yet today Aroostook County is a world-class center for winter sports and Olympic training and the home to an Olympian in the biathlon.

Aroostook's hospitals have become national models for expert and compassionate care in rural regions, particularly for our veterans. Educational institutions and industry have joined together to lead the way in the development of renewable energy sources. The closed bases in Houlton and Presque Isle, and Loring Air Force Base have evolved into hubs of commerce and industry.

Through the years, Aroostook County has gone by many names—the Crown of Maine, the Garden County, the Last Frontier of the East, and, of course, The County. A more recent addition is the motto of the University of Maine at Presque Isle—"North of Ordinary" is the perfect way to describe a place that is truly extraordinary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SHAUNA JEAN RINGEL

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the outstanding work of

Shauna Jean Hill Ringel, who is retiring after 22 years of employment with Madison County, ID.

Shauna is a native of St. Anthony, ID. She moved to Rexburg with her husband, Brad, in 1970, and she raised three children, Ryan, Shelli and Tracy, in Rexburg. After the death of her husband in 1987, Shauna worked at Madison School District's Burton Elementary School as the school's secretary. She began working for Madison County in 1992, and she served as a clerk of district court, 7th Judicial District. She moved to the Madison County Clerk's office in 1996, and she worked both as deputy county clerk and as Madison County's elections clerk. In 2004, she joined the planning and zoning office. She has participated in emergency management training and helped develop emergency plans for Madison County.

The community and our State have been fortunate to have benefited from her devoted assistance that includes significant public service and volunteer work. She served as the co-chair of the Madison County Centennial Committee and coordinated a year of festivities recognizing the pioneer spirit of current and former residents of Madison County. She is also active in the local chapter of the American Red Cross through which she has assisted her friends and neighbors in Red Cross evacuation centers for flooding and wildfire emergencies. She assists families in the Upper Snake River Valley whose lives are disrupted by house fires. Shauna was also deployed to New Jersey to assist with the recovery after Hurricane Sandy, and she assisted with recovery efforts in Montana after devastating wildfires.

Shauna is viewed as someone who can be counted on to go the extra mile and put the team ahead of herself. She is respected for her steady, loyal and reliable efforts. Madison County Commissioner Kimber Ricks characterized Shauna as "a go to" team player. She's always been hard working and reliable; always counted on for good judgment and good nature; and always that sense of humor that helps so much in tough situations . . . Shauna will be missed, but never forgotten."

Thank you, Shauna, for your outstanding and dedicated service. I hope that retirement affords you more well-deserved time with your friends and family, including your children and three grandsons, and opportunities to do all the activities you love the most. I congratulate you on your retirement and wish you all the best.●