

thought success would look like in terms of the number of young healthy people who would sign up. It says:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina officials said—

This is dated May 8—

... that they found that the people who enrolled in the individual Affordable Care Act plans it sold on the online health exchanges were older and sicker than expected. That may mean higher rates—

Higher premiums—

for Affordable Care Act plans in the future. . . .

The insurer's vice president of health policy said: "[It's] a concern when we think about future premiums."

They have great concerns about the amount things are going to go up. That is not what people want. People wanted affordable care. They wanted access to care. They wanted to get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost. What they see is waste—money not going to help people get care, but money being wasted.

I found it interesting coming out of Missouri, a story about how an ObamaCare contractor pays employees to spend their days doing nothing—doing nothing—paying their employees to do nothing.

"A billion dollar government contract involving hundreds of local workers at an ObamaCare processing center. . . ."

So these are people hired by the government or a contractor to work at an ObamaCare processing center—hundreds of local workers.

"But now employees on the inside are stepping forward, asking, Is this why we're broke? Some of them claim to spend most of their day doing nothing." . . .

This is reported in St. Louis.

The contractor is called Serco and local reporters discovered that, despite there not being any work to be done, the government contractor is still hiring.

Why would they be hiring? Because they get a percent of the action. That is why they are hiring. They are hiring people to not do anything, to take the paycheck. The article continues:

"The company is still hiring," says a local reporter. "A current employee wonders why. . . . After providing proof of employment, this . . . employee agreed to speak through the phone with their voice altered. The employee says hundreds of employees spend much of the day staring at computer screens, with little or no work to do."

The reporter asks the employee, "Are there some days where a data entry person may not process a single application?"

Not a single application? The person who works there said: "There are weeks"—weeks—"when a data entry person would not process an application."

The anonymous employee says the contract gets paid by the federal government per employee hired.

That is why they are continuing to hire—because the company gets paid by the Federal Government per employee hired, which is why it is in their interest to have a bunch of employees sitting around all day doing nothing.

So I have to feel an obligation, when I hear a statement on the floor being made that says: Well, a lot fewer people are going to go to the emergency room; it is going to save money—that has not happened. Studies from emergency room doctors, work from the NIH said it is not happening. The exact opposite has happened—a side effect of the health care law, when we see that people are not able to keep their doctors, in spite of the President promising people that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. I feel compelled to come to the floor and share that story with those of us who care about care for patients, who care about finding a way to make sure patients get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost. That is what people want. They know what they want. They want access to care. They want affordable care. They want care, they want choices, and they want quality care.

I believe this health care law is turning out to be bad for patients, bad for providers—the doctors, the nurses, the paramedics, the nurse practitioners—who take care of those patients, and terrible for the taxpayers when we hear stories like this one out of Missouri, which says the employees are being paid to sit around and do nothing, when we hear there are a million people who are just waiting to try to get the government to correct something that should have been fixed in the beginning, when the President, 4 days before the Web site opened up in October, said: easier to use than Amazon, cheaper than your cell phone; keep your doctor if you like your doctor—there was so much misleading of the American public—and then when he says stand and forcefully defend and be proud of this health care law.

I think it is very hard to defend what the President and the Democrats have forced down the throats of the American public, and it is very hard to be proud of the kind of abuse and waste in a system that—whatever the intentions—has proven to the American public to be something they do not want, that they want to have replaced with an opportunity to have access, affordability, choice, and quality. By adopting proposals in a step-by-step fashion that Republicans have been promoting—to deal with those sorts of things of access, affordability, choice, and quality—we can try to ultimately get the American public what they need and what they asked for in the beginning: the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs.

I yield the floor.

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 that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KEITH M. HARPER FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 633.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk on this matter.

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

The legislative 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 Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the UN Human Rights Council.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Elizabeth Warren, Barbara A. Mikulski, Jack Reed, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Christopher Murphy, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Thomas R. Carper, John D. Rockefeller IV, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SHARON Y. BOWEN TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 755.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2018.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The legislative 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 Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Harry Reid, Debbie Stabenow, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Michael F. Bennet, Benjamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Joe Donnelly, Christopher A. Coons, Mark Begich, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Harkin, Angus S. King, Jr., Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARK G. MASTROIANNI TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 691.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark G. Mastroianni, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The legislative 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 Mark G. Mastroianni, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF BRUCE HOWE HENDRICKS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 692.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Bruce Howe Hendricks, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion at the desk on file with the clerk.

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

The legislative 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 Bruce Howe Hendricks, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF TANYA S. CHUTKAN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 733.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion filed at the desk. I ask that it be reported.

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

The legislative 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 Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SYLVIA MATHEWS BURWELL TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 798.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion on file at the desk and I ask that it be reported.

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

The legislative 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 Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Harry Reid, Ron Wyden, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mary Landrieu, Mark Begich, Joe Donnelly, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Harkin, Angus S. King, Jr.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING REMOTE ACCESS MEDICAL

Mr. REID. Madam President, fans of the popular reality television series "Wild Kingdom" may recall watching Stan Brock wrestle giant anacondas in the Amazon and corral wildebeests in the Serengeti, but for the past three decades, he has been engaged in a very different kind of struggle. In 1985, he founded a nonprofit organization known as Remote Area Medical, RAM, with the stated goal of "addressing the needless pain and suffering caused by the lack of healthcare in impoverished, underserved, and isolated areas." Since its inception, RAM has hosted 724 free medical events in which over 80,000 volunteers have delivered \$75 million in free medical, dental and vision care. It is not uncommon for patients to travel hundreds of miles to attend one of these events or to sleep in their cars while they wait for the free clinics to open.

Last month, I had the opportunity to witness RAM in action when they held a 3-day medical event at Hug High School in Reno, NV. In the short time I was there, I saw hundreds of Nevadans filter through the clinic to receive much needed dental work, vaccinations, eye exams, free glasses, mental health screenings, and general medical work ups—all with short waits and at no cost to the patients. The patients attending the clinic were so grateful to finally receive a much needed x ray, pair of glasses, and many other services. I spoke with many of the volunteers—doctors, nurses, dentists—and they were all thrilled to be a part something so meaningful that fills a void for individuals who have no other way to access some of these critical services. A similar scene played out in Las Vegas earlier in the month, where RAM held a 2-day event at Bonanza High School. In total, the RAM team of 597 volunteers served 1,712 patients and provided almost one-half million dollars in care during their two expeditions in Nevada last month.

RAM was able to bring these events to Nevada because it is one of only a few States that allows licensed medical professionals from other States to volunteer at free medical services events. I have witnessed firsthand the value of these events—both for the patients they serve and for those volunteers who want to find a way to donate their professional expertise in a meaningful way. That is why I am convinced that we need Federal legislation that will allow medical practitioners to cross State lines to provide free volunteer care. Senator BOXER has been working to craft such legislation, and I look forward to supporting her in this effort.

Stan Brock's work has been exemplary. Through his efforts, hundreds of thousands of people in need of have received proper healthcare—some for the first time in their lives. My own appreciation for RAM was cemented as I personally witnessed this noble work. Watching Stan and his team work together to help so many unfortunate Nevadans was a moving experience for me. I thank Stan Brock, RAM, and all of the selfless volunteers for giving so much of themselves to those with so little.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I come to the floor today in recognition of the approaching Memorial Day holiday to express my deepest gratitude, respect, and appreciation for the men and women of our Armed Forces and for our veterans. In order to commemorate our vets, the first bill to be marked up and passed out of my Appropriations Committee was the Fiscal Year 2015 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill. I wanted to make sure that there is no question in anyone's mind that veterans are my No. 1 priority.

As the chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have put

money in the Federal checkbook to improve the veterans health care system so that wounded and disabled warriors get the care and benefits they need. I have worked to ensure veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, or a traumatic brain injury, TBI, receive better diagnosis and treatment through the Defense Department and the VA.

In the bill that passed out of my committee today, we established even more checks on the VA by including an additional \$5 million to investigate the wait time practices at all VA medical treatment facilities nationwide. Our committee must invoke even more oversight to ensure that the tragedy that occurred at the Phoenix, AZ VA hospital is not repeated again in other hospitals. The greatest power my committee has is holding the VA accountable by closing the purse strings of their budget. One way we are doing this is by restricting performance bonuses for medical directors, assistant directors, and senior executive services staff until after the inspector general completes its audit on wait times at nationwide veterans treatment facilities. We need to continue to ensure that the VA is being held accountable. That is why I, along with a number of my colleagues, sent a letter to President Obama demanding an investigation by the VA's IG to evaluate the secret lists being kept at the Phoenix VA hospital.

I have also led the charge to reduce the backlog in processing veterans' disability claims. I brought Secretary Shinseki to Baltimore to create a sense of urgency to end the backlog by 2015. I used my power as chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee to convene a hearing with the top brass in the military, VA, and members of the committee to identify challenges and get moving on solutions. I cut across agencies to break down smokestacks and developed a 10-point Checklist for Change enacted as part of the fiscal year 2014 Omnibus appropriations bill. This plan includes better funding, better technology, better training, and better oversight of the VA.

I believe we must keep the promises we have made to our veterans. We can do this by giving them the same quality of service they gave us and by providing them with the care they deserve.

We made a sacred commitment to honor those who served by giving them the benefits they have earned. I will continue to fight for better benefits and treatment for our vets. And I am committed to holding the VA accountable through the powers provided to me through the Appropriations Committee.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, on Memorial Day 2014, I will join a grateful nation in paying homage to the men and women of our Armed Forces

who have given their lives to defend this Nation.

The people of Mississippi are proud and supportive of those in military service. On Memorial Day, citizens all across our State will join other Americans to remember, honor, and say a prayer of thanksgiving for those who gave their lives in service to their country. We will also remember and comfort their families, who mourn the loss of loved ones. We will enjoy the fellowship of our friends and neighbors with whom we enjoy the liberty that has been so precious guarded by the fallen.

The national day of commemoration that we observe today evolved from a practice first started in the aftermath of the Civil War. In April 1866, citizens of Columbus, MS, started what became Decoration Day, time set aside to decorate the graves of Confederate and Union soldiers alike. That tradition of honoring all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice continues to this day. It is the right thing to do.

While we naturally look back to battles now consigned to history, we will also honor those brave men and women who, in more recent times, have died for their country. This Memorial Day 2014, my State will remember Army SPC Terry K.D. Gordon of Shubuta, MS, who lost his life in a helicopter accident in Now Bahar, Afghanistan, on December 18, 2013. We will mourn his loss and honor him for his courage, dedication and sacrifice.

This Memorial Day should also prompt us to recommit ourselves to meeting our obligations to the men and women who take up arms to protect this great Nation. The serious problems that surround the delivery of benefits and services we owe to our veterans are unacceptable. The Department of Veterans Affairs has an important and sacred mission to uphold the full faith and trust of our government's commitment to our veterans.

As I observe Memorial Day and honor those who have given their lives to their country, I will also be mindful of our commitment to protect and support veterans and their families.

SKI AREA RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I wish to highlight an important milestone in our work in Congress. I speak of my legislation to create year-round, sustainable jobs in mountain communities around the country while expanding opportunities for Americans to enjoy the great outdoors through the expansion of summer recreational opportunities at ski areas. On April 17, 2014, the U.S. Forest Service issued its final directives for implementing my Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Act, a law that allows and encourages ski areas on national forests to offer new activities for all seasons, such as expanded hiking and mountain biking, Frisbee golf, climb-

ing walls, mountain coasters, zip lines, ropes courses, special events, and other popular activities.

I am proud to have led this bipartisan effort, from my time in the House, where I first introduced the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act, to here in the Senate, where we saw the president sign it into law in 2011. After its passage, I worked with stakeholders and the U.S. Forest Service to make sure that the law's implementation empowers site-specific decisions that are appropriate for ski areas and local communities. This allows for the greatest opportunity for success in achieving the bill's main goals: boosting rural economies and promoting outdoor recreation. I would like to thank my colleagues Senators FEINSTEIN, HELLER, and BARRASSO for working with me to ensure this would happen.

Ski areas across the country and especially in my home State of Colorado have embraced the new flexibility provided by the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act. Since its passage, they have been proposing projects to create activities for all seasons. I encourage the U.S. Forest Service to quickly review these proposals and to reach the best decision for each local project and community. That includes allowing for public input as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act. The local U.S. Forest Service land managers have a strong record of successfully working with ski areas to manage these long-running partnerships and that record is one of the reasons I advocated for a flexible directive empowering local decisionmaking.

I want to thank the U.S. Forest Service for finalizing a directive that provides that flexibility.

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that expanded recreational opportunities at ski areas will increase summer visits to national forests by 600,000 people each year, create 600 full or part-time jobs and inject nearly \$40 million into mountain communities. I think we all can agree these are substantial gains for rural economies and a testament to the importance of these ski areas to the recreation community and the American public at large.

I also would like to recognize the important support of our other cosponsors: Senators MURRAY, BENNET, RISCH, SHAHEEN, ENZI, CANTWELL, AYOTTE, SANDERS, REID, LEAHY, and STABENOW. It was a strong bipartisan effort and I know we are all eager to see projects get underway to benefit rural economies and the recreating public.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COOKS FROM THE VALLEY

• Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I want to commend the extraordinary work of Cooks from the Valley, a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting our Nation's servicemembers, veterans and their families.

Cooks from the Valley was established in Bakersfield, CA, by local resident Tom Anton, to bring the taste of home cooking to military members stationed all over the world.

What first began with one person in Bakersfield has grown to a diverse group of service-minded volunteers from coast to coast bound by one common goal: to say thank you to the men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Our military members and their families have made tremendous sacrifices and they deserve nothing less than the full and enduring support of a grateful nation. As co-chair of the Senate Military Family Caucus, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone at Cooks from the Valley—Mr. Anton, the volunteers, and many community supporters for their steadfast support of our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

These dedicated Americans generously volunteer their time and resources to travel to all corners of the globe, providing our servicemembers with a taste of home that has boosted the spirits and filled the stomachs of those who put their lives on the line each and every day in service to our Nation. Cooks from the Valley's unique way of giving back to our military men and women should be an inspiration to us all.

As Americans, we have an obligation to give back to those who give so much for us. For many years, Cooks from the Valley has worked to fulfill this responsibility and I know they will continue to make a difference in the lives of our military families for many years to come.●

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I wish to recognize our military servicemembers, their families, and all veterans who have sacrificed in the service of this great country. After a long winter, Americans are finally enjoying the outdoors and spending precious time with their loved ones this month. But we should always remember that we enjoy these freedoms because the Guard, Reserve, and Active members of the U.S. military remain diligent, ready and willing to serve and sacrifice.

We celebrate our 15th annual National Military Appreciation Month this year, thanks to the leadership of my colleague Senator MCCAIN, who sponsored legislation in 1999 that set aside an entire month to honor, remember, and appreciate the patriotism and dedication of the military and their families. Military Appreciation Month includes specific recognition of Loyalty Day on May 1, Victory in Europe Day on May 8, Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 9, Armed Forces Day on May 17, and, most importantly, Memorial Day on May 26.

From the American Revolution to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, military men and women have always made