

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EVERETT ALVAREZ'S CAPTIVITY IN VIETNAM

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, today I honor a superb leader, intrepid warrior, and outstanding role model. Fifty years ago on August 4, then-LTJG Everett "Ev" Alvarez, was shot down in his A-4 Skyhawk during a bombing mission in the Gulf of Tonkin. Everett was the first U.S. pilot shot down over North Vietnam and served 8½ years—the second-longest tenure of any U.S. prisoner of war. Over the years, hundreds of other American prisoners joined him in Hoa Lo prison and similar detention centers around the country. Despite starvation and other significant health challenges, Everett had the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength to endure the harshest conditions imaginable until his release on February 12, 1973.

Mr. Alvarez went on to complete a 20-year career in the Navy, retiring as a Commander in 1980. His service to our Nation, however, did not end there. Upon retirement, Everett earned a law degree and in 1981 was appointed by President Reagan to be the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. Quickly proving his ability to lead outside of the military, a year later President Reagan nominated him in 1982 to be the Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, serving 6 years. Everett went on to serve on several boards, including the board of regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, is a lifetime member on the board of fellows of his alma mater, Santa Clara University, and earlier this year was asked by Secretary Hagel to be a member of the Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Council.

His performance in and out of uniform has been widely recognized, to include the Silver Star, two Legions of Merit, two Bronze Stars, the Distinguished Flying Cross, as well as the Lone Sailor Award, an honor bestowed to sea service veterans for exceptional civilian leadership. Everett has made an indelible impact on his fellow prisoners, service members, and organizations he has been associated with over his lifetime. He is the co-author of two seminal works on the experience of living in captivity—"Chained Eagle" and "Code of Conduct."

Committing a lifetime of service to our Nation, Ev personifies the indomitable American spirit and is a shining example of strength through adversity. In an interview he once famously said, "Together we stepped into the dungeons and we faced the dragon, and we came out of it." On this occasion, I believe it is fitting to recognize Everett Alvarez's 50 years of distinguished service to our Nation.

U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, today, July 31, 2014, marks the 225th

anniversary of the signing by President George Washington of legislation establishing the U.S. Customs Service, the oldest legacy agency of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, CBP, currently within the Department of Homeland Security. The U.S. Customs Service was created by the 5th Act of the 1st Congress.

The U.S. Customs Service placed controls on imports and exports and on shipping and trade, which were deemed essential by the founders of the Republic, and would have been impossible without implementation by an honest, resourceful, and efficient Customs Service. The original Customs collectors, the Customs houses, and today's CBP officers have stood for 225 years as the embodiment of Federal authority at our ports of entry.

After 225 years, the ever more complex demands of our economy and our society require CBP officers to remain alert and ready to perform on short notice a widening variety of tasks. Today's dedicated CBP personnel, and their predecessor Customs inspectors, have been the first line of defense against the entry into the United States of terrorists, terrorist weapons, illicit drugs and other contraband goods, while protecting the economic well-being of the Nation, and supporting American jobs, by facilitating legitimate trade and travel, and protecting this country's intellectual property rights.

ISRAEL

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I come to the floor today in support of the State of Israel, our closest and most critical ally in the Middle East. The escalating violence between Israel and Hamas is extremely disheartening. At this time of extreme instability and conflict in the region, the clear and unyielding support of the United States for Israel is more critical than ever. While we all hope for a peaceful ceasefire and a return to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, we cannot ignore the current situation.

For weeks now, Israel has been responding to Hamas militants in Gaza whose clear mission is to exact a civilian death toll. It is an often-used tactic of Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, to launch rockets into Israel at civilian targets. In doing so, they not only harm innocent Israelis but put Palestinian civilians in danger as well. Hamas's exposure of their own population to danger is made worse when they use civilians in Gaza as human shields. When Hamas used cement for the construction of tunnels to attack and kidnap civilians instead of using it for the construction of peaceful infrastructure projects, they literally chose the path of conflict over the path of peace. Israel has the undeniable right to defend itself against these threats to their civilians, and we must stand by our friend and help protect innocent lives in any way we can.

One thing we can do to continue to support Israel is to continue to support the Iron Dome missile defense system. The United States has provided financial support for this state-of-the-art defense system for years, and I, and many of my colleagues from both parties have been strong and continual supporters since its inception. The technology is extraordinarily effective at stopping rockets fired at civilian targets in Israel from Gaza; according to some estimates, it has intercepted about 90 percent of rockets which otherwise could have hit major population centers in Israel. Ultimately, the Iron Dome protects innocent lives, and I shudder to think of what this conflict's death toll in Israel might be without it. I am reassured that the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee doubled the administration's funding request for the Iron Dome recently, and I commend my colleagues for this tangible show of support for Israel.

I, along with many of my colleagues, am deeply committed to the security of Israel, and I am saddened by the loss of civilian lives on both sides of the current conflict. Too much innocent blood has been shed already.

CHINESE DRYWALL

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I wish to join my colleague, Senator NELSON, in expressing frustration over the Chinese Government's failure to remedy the damages to homeowners, businesses, and contractors caused by Chinese drywall companies.

Beginning some 10 years ago, drywall manufactured by Chinese companies was imported to the United States. A significant amount of the imported Chinese drywall proved to be defective. In my State, this drywall was mostly used in homes and businesses that had suffered substantial damages from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In total, there were thousands of cases in the gulf coast area.

The drywall emitted sulfur gases, which caused physical damage to the homes and significant health problems for the residents. The sulfur gas severely corroded metals found in plumbing, electrical wiring, air-conditioning systems, and household appliances. Health issues included skin irritation, persistent cough, bloody noses, and asthma attacks. For many families who lived through these hurricanes, having to completely rebuild a home again was yet another obstacle to their recovery.

I have maintained that the Consumer Product Safety Commission should have served as the first line of defense in preventing this inferior product from entering the U.S. market. Nevertheless, manufacturers, no matter where they are located, have a responsibility to consumers harmed by defective products.

The homeowners sought relief in court, and most of the cases were consolidated in the Eastern District of

Louisiana, where the court identified two companies as the primary perpetrators; Knauf Entities and Taishan Entities. Knauf Entities participated in litigation and paid damages. Unfortunately, Taishan Entities has refused to appear to defend lawsuits in U.S. courts and will not negotiate with those harmed by the defective sheet-rock.

The Honorable Judge Eldon Fallon of the Eastern District of Louisiana issued an order holding Taishan in both civil and criminal contempt on July 17, 2014. The order also enjoined Taishan and its affiliates from conducting business in the United States until it participates in the judicial process. Although this is a win for Taishan's victims, they deserve and require tangible compensation for their losses.

The Chinese Government has shown no willingness to hold this company accountable. Meanwhile, thousands of families are still waiting for justice. We cannot allow Taishan Entities to hide from the United States judicial process and further injure those who have suffered.

I urge this body to call on Taishan Entities to do the right thing and respect international law. Additionally, we should continue to pressure the Chinese Government to hold companies within its borders accountable for their actions.

EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLANS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I wish to reiterate my longstanding support for employee stock ownership plans or ESOPs. During my time in the Senate, I have been dedicated to building on the lasting contributions of my Louisiana predecessors, including Senator Russell B. Long, who, as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, championed tax provisions to encourage corporations to adopt ESOPs. Senator Long advocated for employee stock ownership as an "issue that cuts across party lines in an attempt to bring out the best in our free enterprise system." He believed that "it is only fair and right that those who work to make this economy succeed should have an opportunity to share in that success . . . [i]t is a matter of simple common sense and basic equity." I couldn't agree more.

Designed to expand employee ownership of firms through stock distribution to employees, over time, ESOPs have a proven track record of encouraging capital expansion and economic equality for American workers. The National Center for Employee Ownership estimates that 11 million people are employed by the roughly 12,000 companies that have adopted ESOP and ESOP-like plans and estimates that ESOP participants have about 2.5 times the retirement assets of individuals who do not participate.

Last year, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and En-

trepreneurship, I convened a roundtable to provide small business owners, policy experts and other stakeholders an opportunity to express their views and to solicit their ideas on making tax reform work for small businesses. Participants argued in favor of a Tax Code that rewards employer and employee ownership as a means of providing continuity of business ownership and opportunities for employees of businesses to build wealth. Specifically, participants favored retaining the current Tax Code's ESOP provisions, noting that during the most recent economic downturn, ESOPs, which are predominately small businesses, were able to retain more employees as they weathered the crisis than conventionally owned companies.

Companies in Louisiana have embraced ESOPs and as a result have seen both businesses and their employees realize the benefits. One prime example is Acadian Ambulance, a Lafayette, Louisiana-based company, and the Nation's largest private, employee-owned ambulance service. Acadian Ambulance became a 30 percent-employee-owned company in 1993 and subsequently became a majority employee-owned company in 1998. Today, Acadian Ambulance is a thriving business whose employee owners have retirement security because of Acadian Ambulance's employee stock ownership plan. Its ESOP Committee has been recognized as one of the best in the Nation, having won 25 regional and national awards since 2001. Acadian Ambulance has grown to over 200 ambulances, a \$180 million budget, and 2,000 employees who have retirement security.

Earlier this year, the New York Times published an article describing the research of three labor economists who have focused their work on promoting ESOPs as a "new perspective on how to resolve the disparities in wealth and income." I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the New York Times article, dated February 11, 2014, and titled, "Whatever Happened to 'Every Man a King'?" These experts, Dr. Joseph Blasi and Dr. Richard Kruse of Rutgers University, and Dr. Douglas Freeman of Harvard University, argue in their book, "The Citizen's Share", that policies promoting employee ownership date back to the era of the Founding Fathers and have garnered support from politicians and stakeholders across the political spectrum—from Ronald Reagan to Senator BERNIE SANDERS.

Quite simply, policies that promote ESOPs are policies that merit this Chamber's bipartisan support and I will continue the work of my Louisiana predecessors to ensure retirement security for working Americans.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Feb. 11, 2014]

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "EVERY MAN A KING"?

(By Thomas B. Edsall)

A passionate group of labor economists has taken up a cause championed 40 years ago by Senator Russell Long of Louisiana: to turn every worker into a capitalist. Long, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee from 1966 to 1981, inherited a populist commitment from his father, Huey Long, the Louisiana governor who famously campaigned on the slogan "Every Man a King."

In 1973, Long became intrigued by the idea of granting corporations generous tax incentives to distribute stock to employees through Employee Stock Ownership Plans, or ESOPs. Long's question was, could ESOPs "make haves out of the have-nots without taking it away from the haves?" Working on assurances that this was indeed the case, Long said, "That's the kind of populism I can buy."

Beginning in 1974, Long won enactment of a series of bills establishing tax incentives favorable to corporations that transferred company stock into ESOPs. In 2012, the National Center for Employee Ownership estimated that the number of ESOPs had grown to 12,000, covering 11 million workers with \$858 billion in assets. Companies employing at least 10,000 workers with ESOPs include Publix Supermarkets; WAWA; WinCo Foods; and the employee-owned private equity firm, Alliance Holdings.

After Long retired in 1987, however, some of the tax breaks he sponsored were eliminated or weakened as Democratic and Republican administrations sought new federal revenues to reduce the deficit.

Robert Hockett, a law professor at Cornell, wrote in 2006 that ESOPs had expanded employee ownership of firms, but that "there is indeed a gap to be filled—that firm ownership remains nowhere near as widespread as home and human capital ownership."

Now three prominent labor policy experts have taken up Long's cause. They are convinced that a major expansion of employee ownership is the most effective tool available to remediate inequality. The three experts—Richard B. Freeman of the economics department at Harvard, and Douglas L. Kruse and Joseph R. Blasi, both professors at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers—have been promoting worker capitalism in numerous papers and books. Together they edited "Shared Capitalism at Work: Employee Ownership, Profit and Gain Sharing and Broad-Based Stock Options" and last year they released "The Citizen's Share: Putting Ownership Back into Democracy."

In "The Citizen's Share," Blasi, Freeman and Kruse make a broad, ideologically cross-cutting case on behalf of profit sharing and employee ownership: "It offers a new way to address the concentration of both economic and political power that many citizens believe is distorting the country. It offers a new perspective on how to fight the links between the Washington politicians, K Street lobbyists, big corporations, and political donors that fuel many Tea Party members' opposition to government. It offers a new perspective on how to resolve the huge disparities in wealth and income."

They make the following specific arguments.

First, they contend that policies promoting employee ownership have strong public support and that these policies reflect the convictions of the founders, including Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Politicians on both sides of the partisan divide support ESOP proposals.

Senators from the left, including Democrats Ben Cardin of Maryland, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Mary L. Landrieu of