

COMMEMORATING HANFORD B's SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague Senator CANTWELL to commemorate the Hanford B Reactor in our home State of Washington as we approach the 70th anniversary of the world's first full-scale self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction. An essential part of the Manhattan Project, on September 26, 1944, the B Reactor was successfully energized to convert uranium into plutonium, an event known as going critical. The entire facility was built in only 13 months, and only a handful of the 50,000 workers at the site knew what was being assembled. The speed and precision of the construction of the facility remain an engineering marvel today. It was not until later that the majority of these workers learned they had played a key role in the history of nuclear materials production in the United States and helped the U.S. win World War II and the Cold War.

The B Reactor went on to operate for more than 20 years until 1968, making its mark on the 20th century. After ceasing operations, the B Reactor was to be encased in concrete like all the other reactors as part of the Hanford Reservation cleanup efforts. Given the B Reactor's historic role, I worked for many years with Senator CANTWELL and the entire Washington delegation to ensure this piece of our nation's history is preserved for generations to come. After years of hard work, I was pleased when the U.S. Department of the Interior designated the B Reactor as a national historic landmark in 2008, and the B Reactor now receives more than 10,000 visitors a year from around the Nation and the world to see and experience this important part of world history. Today, the B Reactor remains a symbol for the Hanford Reservation, the entire Tri-Cities community, Washington State, and our Nation as a whole.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I join my colleague Senator MURRAY in commemorating this important day in American history. Seventy years ago, when the B Reactor went critical, it forever changed history and thrust society into the Atomic Age. On September 26, 1944 the Manhattan Project overcame a major obstacle when the B Reactor—the first full-scale nuclear reactor—proved that it was possible to develop plutonium in large quantities, and the world was forever transformed. Our constituents in Washington State are reminded of that change daily, as the workers at the Hanford Reservation continue their efforts to clean up the legacy of the B Reactor and the eight other reactors built and operated at Hanford. The history of this fateful day and the entire Manhattan Project must be remembered so that our Nation has the opportunity to reflect on and learn from the important lessons this facility has to offer.

Our collective work to designate the B Reactor as a national historic land-

mark is a great start, but the Manhattan Project story cannot be told at the B Reactor alone. This is why I am working with Senator MURRAY and our colleagues in Tennessee and New Mexico to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. The Manhattan Project National Historical Park Act would commemorate the historic achievements made by the workers at the Hanford Reservation and at other Manhattan Project sites across the country. The men and women who worked on the B Reactor played an unforgettable role in our Nation's history, and it is important that we remember their lasting impact.

Mrs. MURRAY. I commend Senator CANTWELL for her work on the Manhattan Project National Historical Park Act and will continue to push this legislation forward with our colleagues in Congress. The 70th anniversary of the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor going critical is a fitting tribute and reminder that this landmark moment in history should be preserved for future generations through the creation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES MEZA, JR.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and honor Dr. James Meza, Jr., who has devoted much of his life to ensuring that all of Louisiana's students receive an excellent education. He currently serves as Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System and while he will soon retire from this role, he will be leaving behind an indelible mark of impressive leadership and results. On behalf of the U.S. Senate and the State of Louisiana, I applaud Dr. Meza as a champion of high quality education and for his devotion to Louisiana's public education system.

Dr. Meza's experience in education spans more than 40 years and crosses teaching and leadership positions both at the K-12 and higher education levels. As a champion of education reform, Dr. Meza developed many of the pioneering ideas in Louisiana that led to revolutionary reform movements across the Nation. In the devastating aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav, Dr. Meza was instrumental in one of the most transformational endeavors of modern public education helping to establish the Recovery School District in New Orleans, LA, which is now 100 percent public charter schools and has experienced extraordinary progress in closing the achievement gap.

Dr. Meza served most recently as the Superintendent of Jefferson Parish Public School System, Louisiana's largest and most diverse school district, serving 46,000 students. Since becoming the head of Jefferson Parish Public School System in 2011, Dr. Meza has led a reform agenda that has transformed the school system from one in a downward spiral for achievement to

one of Louisiana's most improved school systems. In 2 years, Jefferson Parish Public School System has improved its State performance rating from a letter grade "D" to "B." In that same period, the number of "A" and "B" schools has increased dramatically, from 13 to 32. Jefferson Parish is home to 4 schools that are ranked in the top 10 in Louisiana.

Prior to becoming Superintendent of Jefferson Parish Public School System, Dr. Meza served as Professor and Dean at the University of New Orleans, UNO, for more than 21 years where he published more than 40 journal articles to study education reform, specifically focused on serving children of low-income families in Louisiana and nationwide. Dr. Meza is recognized nationally for redefining the role of colleges of education and their work with low performing schools. As Dean, he launched the UNO Charter School Network of four charter schools, as well as Louisiana's first Type 5—turnaround—charter school. His efforts were recognized by New Orleans City Business, which presented him with the "Innovator of the Year" award. He received the honor and title of Professor and Dean Emeritus from the LSU system, recognizing his years of scholarship at UNO.

Dr. Meza has served as the Executive Director of the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, BESE, and the Interim State Superintendent of Education for Louisiana. During this time, he was a pioneer in school accountability, launching Louisiana's educational quality and trust fund, 8G, and restructuring the Department of Education as Louisiana transformed the State Superintendent's position from an elected position to one appointed by BESE. Dr. Meza also has served as a faculty member at Nicholls State University, principal of Cabrini High School, and teacher at E.D. White and Isidore Newman High School.

Dr. Meza has received numerous awards and deserved recognitions for his transformational work in the education sphere. He is the recipient of The Weiss Award by the New Orleans Council for Community and Justice, which honors members of the Greater New Orleans community for civic and humanitarian contributions. He has also been recognized as a "Super Hero" by the national organization Stand for Children for his work in improving quality educational opportunities for children of poverty.

Dr. Meza currently serves on the Board of Directors of Holy Cross School and was a member of the Louisiana Serve Commission and the Southern University System Board of Supervisors. He is also a founding board member of Ben Franklin High School and Edward Hynes charter schools. Dr. Meza served 32 years in the Louisiana Army National Guard and retired at the rank of Colonel.

I am proud that Louisiana's students and teachers have had the strong leadership and guidance of Dr. Meza over

the years. Dr. Meza's leadership as the Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System will be missed; however, I have full faith and trust that he will continue to lead in improving the educational prospects and outcomes for Louisiana's students in whatever role he pursues next. Once again, I am privileged and honored to formally recognize Dr. James Meza, Jr. for his commitment and efforts to strengthen public education in Louisiana.

140TH ANNIVERSARY OF A.O. SMITH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate A.O. Smith Corporation, a "Made in Wisconsin" company on the occasion of their 140th anniversary.

A.O. Smith was founded in 1874 in Milwaukee, WI, and over the past century has grown rapidly from a small family business specializing in the fabrication of metal hardware specialties to a global water technology manufacturer producing residential and commercial water heaters, boilers, and water purification equipment. Today they employ more than 10,000 people across the United States and the world.

The company was instrumental in helping to usher in the automobile revolution, developing a new, lightweight steel car frame a development that caught the interest of major car companies including Peerless, Cadillac, Packard, Oldsmobile, and Ford. Ford's initial order of 10,000 frames led A.O. Smith to develop the world's first mass production process for assembling frames, later introducing the world's first automated frame production line. This first fully automated frame assembly plant came to be known as the "mechanical marvel" due to the line's ability to make a frame every eight seconds—10,000 frames a day.

Their engineers discovered an improved method for welding, allowing for the production of a wide range of steel products. This included the pressure vessel for oil refining and large diameter steel pipe, important components in the oil and natural gas industries.

One of the company's most important and enduring innovations was the process of fusing glass to steel. By perfecting this process, the company developed a range of new products, including glass-lined beer kegs, glass-lined brewery tanks, and glass-lined residential water heaters. Glass-lined water heaters rapidly became an industry standard that endures today and led to A.O. Smith's growth as a global company and as an important economic driver for Southeastern Wisconsin.

In recent years, A.O. Smith has emerged as a vital player in global water technologies, developing solutions to our water challenges. A co-founding member of The Water Council, A.O. Smith has helped ensure Mil-

waukee's place as a world water leader, while supporting economic development in Wisconsin. The Water Council helped bring about the creation of the Global Water Center, which houses water-related business accelerators and research facilities, including A.O. Smith's global water treatment lab, where engineers conduct controlled testing on water purification products sold around the world. Bringing together their work has helped transform Milwaukee into one of the world's most significant hubs for water research, education, and economic development.

I am proud to recognize A.O. Smith as a "Made in Wisconsin" leader, and I share my best wishes with the company and their employees for their continued success.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING JEFF GRAPPONE

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to say a few kind words about my longtime communications director and friend, Jeff Grappone—a native of Concord, NH.

Jeff has served as my chief spokesman since I ran for the Senate in 2010. He's traveled with me from Nashua all the way up to Colebrook, and from Keene to Portsmouth. He was by my side at the Statehouse when I filed my paperwork to become a candidate, and he was there when I won the primary and general elections. Jeff was present for my ceremonial swearing-in that took place in the Old Senate Chamber, and he then immediately got to work establishing my Senate press office.

Jeff helped me hit the ground running as a first-time candidate and as a new Senator. He has provided me with outstanding communications counsel, and I've drawn on his considerable experience here on Capitol Hill as well as back home in New Hampshire. He's been an invaluable adviser as I've gone about my work in the Senate—helping me effectively communicate my legislative priorities in Washington and in the Granite State.

Jeff has worked tirelessly in my office. It wasn't unusual for him to work into the night until the last vote was called in the Senate, and then head up to New Hampshire for a press conference the next morning. He has brought energy and enthusiasm to my staff, and he shares my strong commitment to serving the people of the Granite State.

After nearly a decade in politics and on Capitol Hill—on the legislative staff of Congressman Charles F. Bass, as Press Secretary to Senator John E. Sununu, and as a spokesman for Senator JOHN MCCAIN's presidential campaign, Jeff is about to embark on a new chapter in his career outside of government. As he makes this transition, I will miss his intellect, his expertise, his good humor, and his inherent decency.

Jeff lives by our State's motto, "Live Free or Die," and he has New Hampshire in his blood. He has been a talented and diligent member of my staff, and he's a loyal friend. I wish Jeff the very best always.●

TRIBUTE TO BOB NASH

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor one of New Hampshire's most respected, accomplished, and beloved citizens—Bob Nash—as he enters into his retirement. I am proud to recognize his illustrious professional career, and his continued service to our country and many communities across the Granite State.

Bob attended the Georgia Military Academy before transferring to the University of Florida, where he graduated with a degree in journalism. After college, Bob joined the Army and bravely served our Nation as a helicopter platoon commander in Vietnam. Bob flew 325 missions and was awarded both the Bronze Star and United States Military Air Medal. He eventually earned the rank of Captain.

Following his dedicated service to our country, Bob began a 38-year career in association management, and obtained his Master's in Business Administration and Certified Executive Association certification. In 2001, he became president of the New Hampshire Association of Insurance Agents, NHAIA. Under his leadership, the association received several accolades, including the Bronze Excellence in Education Award, Gold Excellence in Education Awards, the Diamond Excellence in Education Award, and the InsurPAC Eagle Award. The association was also honored with the Innovations in Education, Non-Seminar Education Services, and L.P. McCord Education Award for Excellence. Most noteworthy, in 2011, the NHAIA was awarded the Maurice G. Herndon National Legislative Award—the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a State association.

Bob Nash is an extraordinary Granite Stater whose commitment to others extends beyond his military and professional career. For many years he has been actively involved with the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary International, the Kawanis, and the United Way. I wish Bob and his wife Pat all the best as they enjoy retirement at home in Hillsboro. New Hampshire is fortunate to have such outstanding citizens such as Bob, and I am proud to call him my friend.●

CELEBRATING LANCASTER'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Lancaster, NH, which is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding this year. I am proud to join citizens across the Granite State in recognizing this special milestone.

Located along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire's North Country,