

sponsored efforts to wipe Israel off the map, and that we can indeed protect Americans from the reign of terror that has been a state-sponsored effort.

There is nothing less that we should ask of this administration or any administration. We need to protect the American people. At the negotiating table—when we sit 2 or 3 feet across from the people with whom we are negotiating—we cannot ignore what is happening through state-sponsored terrorism. We cannot ignore the cargo ships in the Strait of Hormuz that have been stormed. We cannot ignore what has happened in Yemen or Hezbollah. We cannot ignore the reality that we face today of an Iran that has not changed in 30 years.

The fact is our sanctions have worked, and the fact is that increased sanctions could work as well. I hope before this negotiation is signed off and agreed to, they will realize who is making the negotiations happen and possible and that more needs to be done to protect Americans and protect the world from an Iran that simply doesn't have a dangerous threat posed to us from nuclear weapons but which poses the danger through state-sponsored terrorism which they continue to pursue today.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING MICHAEL W. DOWNING

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the exceptional service and the extraordinary life of Rockingham County High Sheriff Michael "Mike" W. Downing of Salem, NH, who passed away recently following his battle with cancer.

Sheriff Downing was a knowledgeable, respected and compassionate public safety professional, a problem solver, and a concerned community member. He was one of a kind, and was beloved by everyone who knew him.

Raised in Salem, Mike attended Saint Joseph's School and graduated from Salem High School in 1972. He went on to serve our Nation as a member of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, after which Mike began what would be a long career of service to the State of New Hampshire, first as a N.H. State trooper after graduating from the 47th New Hampshire Police Academy. He continued his career in law enforcement service, joining the Salem Police Department where he rose to the rank of detective sergeant. Mike was a graduate of the Command Train-

ing Institute at Babson College, and earned an associate's degree from Southern New Hampshire University and a bachelor's degree from Franklin Pierce College.

After his retirement from the Salem Police Department, Mike continued his public service through his work in the State legislature. He served three terms as a State representative and then served two terms as a State senator, where he held the position of senate minority leader. In 2010, Mike returned to his law enforcement roots and was elected the High Sheriff of Rockingham County. Downing was serving in his third term as sheriff at the time of his passing.

In addition to his professional and elected service to the State of New Hampshire, Mike was very active in his local community. He gave generously of his time and energy as the 301st captain commanding of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, an ASA Salem softball coach, a NH Little League coach, a member of the Knights of Columbus, trustee of Amvets Post 2, a past president and board member of Salem Haven Nursing Home and Silverthorne Adult Daycare, a member of the Rockingham County Law Enforcement Association, Rockingham County Chiefs of Police Association, International Chiefs of Police Association, the National Sheriffs' Association, the NH Sheriffs' Association and a founding board member of Isaiah 58, a nonprofit organization focused on helping the homeless population of Rockingham County.

Most recently, he was honored as the 2015 recipient of the Chief John P. Ganley Community Service Award which is presented to an individual "who has exhibited concern, involvement and leadership in the community of Salem; while providing inspiration to others, through his or her dedication, integrity and courage in the manner exemplified by Chief John P. Ganley during his life on earth."

Sheriff Downing leaves behind the love of his life, his wife Heidi Downing and their five children, Jennifer, Jessica, Kaitlin, Kelsey, and Michael along with six grandchildren, Charlotte, Bella, Jacob, Logan, TJ, and Max. He also leaves his parents, Delbert and Teresa Downing. We are all deeply saddened by the loss of our friend Mike, an extraordinary man and proud New Hampshire son who served our State and Nation with honor, courage, and dedication. He represented the very best of our State, and I ask my colleagues to join me in sending Heidi and her family our deepest condolences and our gratitude for Mike's life of service to the people of New Hampshire.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator SANDERS and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, last week marked an important step as we worked in a bipartisan manner to improve the lives of survivors of trafficking. We were able to move the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act forward and help provide direct supports and services for these survivors, thanks to support from the Community Health Center Fund.

Community health centers are the safety net providers of our health care system. In my home State of Washington, they provide full health care services for working families across the State, and they work tirelessly to ensure that individuals get the supports and services they need. Community health centers help keep health care costs down and keep people out of the emergency room by improving health outcomes for the populations they serve.

Our community health centers were strengthened by the work in the Affordable Care Act, and I am proud that we were able to once again work together to strengthen them as part of the Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization Act earlier this year.

This was a very unique circumstance, and it is not a precedent for Congress to draw on the Community Health Center Fund for other purposes. It is my hope and intention that this was the one and only time Congress draws money from the health center fund to pay for other programs. This funding was intended to keep the health centers program whole so that more than 1,300 health centers nationwide can continue to provide access to care for their patients for the next 2 years.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as you know, I have worked for many years to ensure all Americans have access to primary care. Community health centers are instrumental in providing that access to primary medical, oral, and mental health care. Right now, community health centers provide primary care to 24 million patients in 9,000 underserved communities in every State and territory across the country.

Until last month, health centers were facing a 70-percent reduction in funding this fall due to the expiration of the Community Health Center Fund. On an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis, I was very pleased that Congress was able to extend the health center fund in the Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization Act bill for 2 years to avert this massive cut to the program.

Although I supported legislation to provide funds for victims of trafficking, taking money recently allocated to community health centers in the SGR bill to pay for health care services for victims of trafficking was not a good solution. Both of these programs serve important populations with significant health care needs, and I understand from those who negotiated this agreement that the funding transfer was a special circumstance as a way to move forward on this bill.

It is my hope and understanding from the bill sponsors that this was the one and only time Congress draws money from the Health Center Fund to pay for other programs.

Mrs. MURRAY. I am proud of the progress we have been able to make for survivors of trafficking and that we were able to use community health centers funding to help this very vulnerable population at a time when they need it the most.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator CASEY and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

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

63RD NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, earlier this year, Senator CASEY and I had the honor of serving as the cochair of the National Prayer Breakfast. The annual event is a longtime tradition that celebrates the importance of faith and fellowship in our lives. This year's breakfast featured moving prayers, songs, and speeches from a number of notable guests, including race car legend Darrell Waltrip.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, Senator WICKER and I would like to thank all of the individuals who were involved in making the 2015 National Prayer Breakfast a great success. Thousands of people from across the country and world participated, including President Obama and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On behalf of Senator WICKER and myself, I ask unanimous consent that the full transcript be printed in the RECORD.

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

63RD NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2015, WASHINGTON, DC, CO-CHAIRS: SENATOR ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., SENATOR ROGER F. WICKER

The Honorable ROGER F. WICKER: Good morning, everyone. I am Senator Roger Wicker from Mississippi, and together with my colleague, Senator Bob Casey from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we welcome you to the 63rd Annual National Prayer Breakfast.

It is an honor to serve with Bob as co-chairman this year, and we thank you for joining us this morning. Each year this event is one of the most special and memorable in Washington. Today, some 3,500 of us have gathered in this ballroom and in auxiliary rooms down the hall. We represent all 50 states and 130 nations. As the Psalm says, "Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for Thou shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations of the earth. Let the people praise Thee, oh God. Let all the people praise Thee." So, for the 130 nations represented in this room today—be glad, be joyful, and praise God.

Since 1953, the National Prayer Breakfast has exemplified and celebrated the power of prayer and fellowship in our lives. We come together as Ephesians 5:19 directs us, "Addressing one another in Psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart."

We have a truly remarkable program with guests and performers this morning. Like our weekly prayer breakfasts in the Senate and the House, we will have Scripture, prayers, songs, and speakers sharing their stories and reflections. Our hope is that you leave today with new blessings and perspectives about the strong community of faith in this country and around the world.

The Honorable ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.: My name is Bob Casey and I'm honored to be here this morning with my co-chair, Roger Wicker, my friend who has labored with us these two years. Roger, we're grateful for your work.

In just a few minutes we'll have the opportunity to give a warm welcome to the President and the First Lady when they arrive. And in the meantime, we hope you are enjoying your breakfast and getting to know those at your table, if you don't know them already. We're honored you're with us.

And now to lead us in our first prayer, I'm happy to welcome Rabbi Gregory Marx to the podium. For more than twenty-five years, Rabbi Marx has been the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. We are grateful that he is with us today. And he will do our prayer and then we'll have a break, and then we'll go to the second part of the program. Rabbi Marx.

Rabbi GREGORY S. MARX: Thank you, Senator. Good morning.

The Biblical prophet, Micah proclaimed: It has been told you what is good, and what the Lord requires of you, only to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. Justice without mercy leads to harsh judgment. Mercy without justice creates a world where there's no accountability, no moral goodness. At this moment, may God bless us with both mercy and justice so that we may tenderly care for those in need of compassion and rejoice in the good of others. We celebrate this morning our uniqueness as well as our commonality. We come from our different faith perspectives, yet are united in a fervent desire to strengthen the hands and the hearts of those who seek to build an enduring society, which tolerates neither bigotry nor hatred. Master of the universe, inspire us to release those reservoirs of spirit and mind which make us truly partners with you. Grant us patience and hopefulness in our daily tasks. May we never give in to despair, despite their enormity. Give us love for truth above cleverness, for people above things, for God above all else. Remind us in the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln, that religious devotion is not about having God on our side, which mistakenly prompts us to condemn the faith of others, but rather it is about being on God's side, which requires devotion to civic duty, tolerance, humility, justice, mercy, and peace. Be with us, oh God, as we seek to establish new ties of friendship across religious, racial, and ethnic boundaries, to create innovative opportunities of service, to rejoice in the growth of all of our children. And to lovingly and faithfully support our fellow men and women who are in need of God's care and affection. May God bless our beloved and noble country and those who defend her, so that each may one day sit under their own vine and fig tree and none shall be afraid. Give us, oh God, the good sense and understanding to buttress the moral fiber of American life, that we may gird ourselves with integrity, and to successfully meet the immense challenges before us. Keep us, oh God, from pride which prevents us from seeing the need for real change and steel us with a commitment to stay the course when necessary. Most of all, oh God, shield us from impatient judgment towards those who differ from us. May we always remember that you are exalted, oh God when-

ever and wherever men and women work together to fulfill Micah's prophetic vision of justice, mercy, humility. And let us say, Amen.

Senator WICKER: Thank you Rabbi Marx. At this point, continue enjoying your breakfast and the conversation with our table guests. The President and his party will be here in a few moments.

[Applause]

Senator CASEY: May everyone have a seat. Thanks very much everyone. We're honored that the President and the First Lady are with us. As Senator Wicker and I said earlier, we're honored you're with us this morning, and we're grateful for the folks who helped put this breakfast together every year.

I'm honored to share with everyone in this audience an excerpt from a message from Rome, by Pope Francis. This message is to all of us gathered here at this National Prayer Breakfast, and he writes in part, and I quote:

"Dear Friends, I send prayerful good wishes for you, for the fruitfulness of your work. I ask you to pray for me, and to join me in praying for our brothers and our sisters throughout the world who experience persecution and death for their faith. Upon you, your families, and those whom you serve, I cordially invoke God's blessings of wisdom, joy, and peace."

We're honored that the Holy Father would send us that message. The entirety of the message will be read at today's luncheon. While Pope Francis couldn't be with us today in person, His Excellency the Papal Nuncio, the Holy Father's representative in the United States is here today and we're honored by his presence.

All of us, as well have the extraordinary privilege today to be joined at this breakfast by another inspirational spiritual leader and peacemaker, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We're honored by his presence. [Applause]

When I was in state government in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, I worked in the finance building, and right over the building in the front of the building, was an inscription that I think is a good summation of what it means to be in public service. And I'm quoting from that precept inscribed on the building—here's what it says: "All public service is a trust given in faith and accepted in honor." Senator Wicker and I, and those who are in the room who are elected officials, have accepted that honor to serve. We also feel privileged. I know this is true of Roger, and me, and so many others, but we're privileged to do our work in the Senate, but the excessive partisanship and politics that occurs in this town too often gets in the way and divides the Senate. That's why the weekly prayer breakfast on Wednesdays, on every Wednesday that the Senate is in session, is a way for us to have an oasis from the politics of the place. We gather at that breakfast for prayer and to share some time with each other every Wednesday morning—just as we're doing this morning with people from so many different states, different countries, backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. We're reminded this morning of the journey, the journey of faith that we're all on, and we believe that faith is a gift, and a gift that we're blessed by today and express gratitude. Senator Wicker. [Applause]

Senator WICKER: Thank you, Bob. The Senate prayer breakfast dates back to World War II when a group of legislators met in the Senate restaurant. We can only imagine the conversations that took place during those early days as the deadliest conflict in human history swept the globe. Then as now, the weekly meetings which occur when the Senate is in session have remained largely low profile. In January of 1943, an article from