

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SAM CHAPMAN

• Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my great friend and former colleague Sam Chapman, who is retiring on February 1, 2015, after a long and distinguished career in public service.

I first had the opportunity to work with Sam when we were both county supervisors in northern California. When I was elected to the Marin County Board of Supervisors in 1976, Sam had already served 2 years on the neighboring Napa County Board of Supervisors after successfully defeating an incumbent. He was only 26 at the time, but he had been motivated to launch his underdog run after watching the incumbent fall asleep at a public meeting. Although he called his 1974 win “the beginning of my career in politics,” Sam had already shown a deep dedication to the ideals of public service.

After receiving his law degree from the University of California at Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law, Sam joined Volunteers in Service to America, VISTA, a national public service program envisioned by President John F. Kennedy and implemented by President Lyndon Johnson to fight poverty in America. He worked with VISTA as a volunteer attorney in the field of poverty law and later became a staff attorney for the Napa County Legal Assistance Agency. He then opened his own general practice law office in Napa prior to running for supervisor.

Sam and I have always shared so many values—he has always been a strong advocate for the environment and other progressive causes—and during the 6 years we served together, we worked to improve the lives of people throughout our North Bay communities. When I was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1982, I knew right away that I wanted Sam on my team. For more than 20 years—as press secretary, legislative director, and finally as my chief of staff—Sam worked tirelessly every day to serve the people of the State of California.

In 2004, seeking a new way to serve his community, Sam left the U.S. Senate to become the publisher of the Pacific Sun, a weekly newspaper focused on Marin County. He always had an interest in the news media, having worked as a reporter and editor for the Napa Valley Register prior to receiving his law degree. In 2010, following his lifelong interest in the environment and renewable energy issues, he became the State and Community Affairs Manager at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, where he has worked to strengthen the lab’s ties with the local and regional community. Throughout his career in public service, Sam also found the time to serve on a number of environmental commissions, lending his expertise to the Bay Conservation

and Development Commission, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and California Air Resources Board.

For more than three decades, Sam has been a trusted ally, advisor, and friend. As he begins his retirement and embarks on the next exciting phase of his life, I send him and his family, especially his two beautiful daughters Allegra and Sabrina, my best wishes, deep affection, and abiding gratitude.●

JOHNSON CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CENTENNIAL

• Mr. CORKER. Madam President, on July 6, 2015, the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce will celebrate its centennial.

For 100 years the chamber has promoted business, enhanced economic and community development, and served as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of life for people in the Tri-Cities.

In many cities across Tennessee, chamber of commerce members are the lifeblood of the community. They are our educators, our bankers, our doctors, our pharmacists, and more, and they share a common dedication to improving the quality of lives of their fellow citizens.

As a former businessman, chamber member and mayor, I know firsthand that what we do here in Washington, including Federal regulations and tax policies, has a direct impact on businesses and communities across Tennessee.

For far too long, Washington has put off addressing these issues as well as what I believe should be our top priority: getting our fiscal house in order.

As I speak with Tennessee chamber of commerce groups, one thing is obvious. They are ready for Washington to govern responsibly and finally focus on growing our economy, repairing our fiscal house and strengthening our Nation’s role in the world.

Some of America’s greatest achievements and longest-lasting solutions have occurred when one party controls Congress and another the White House.

It will take hard work, but I am optimistic. If the President rolls up his sleeves and provides leadership and if Congress acts responsibly, I truly believe we can begin to solve some of the big issues members of the chamber care most about.

I congratulate the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce on their centennial celebration. I appreciate their input on how we can strengthen our communities and unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of our local businesses. I thank them for making the Tri-Cities a great place to live and do business, and I look forward to working with them for years to come.●

VERMONT ESSAY FINALISTS

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD finalist essays written by Vermont High

School students as part of the Fifth Annual “What is the State of the Union” Essay contest conducted by my office. These 20 finalists were selected from over 400 entries.

The essays follow:

SAM ANGLUM, BURR AND BURTON ACADEMY (FINALIST)

We marched along for roughly 5 miles, part of which was right through Times Square. While holding up our signs and chanting what we wanted to see change in our government’s priorities, I looked to my left and gazed at the skyline full of skyscrapers atop the canopy of Central Park.

My class and I were marching alongside 400,000 New Yorkers, Americans, and globally aware citizens at the 2014 NYC Climate March. Climate change is a very serious issue that not many people are sensitive enough about. My hopes going into the march were to be a part of bringing global awareness to the massive shift in attitude I feel is going to save the Earth from its imminent doom.

After participating in such a momentous event, I want my voice to echo further than the streets of Manhattan. I want the United States government to consider helping by promoting climate education in schools across the nation so that this kind of action becomes a part of the everyday agenda. As a high school student in Vermont, I urge my very own state senators including Governor Shumlin to consider spreading this type of education across the State of Vermont. I imagine the future generations as the key components to setting goals and battling for solutions to the problems that people are fighting against today.

Not everyone will be an activist, or even care nearly as much as they should, but as long as more of the youth is aware of these pressing global issues, the amount of people that will create change will no doubt be multiplied. Our world’s economic foundation is based on the over-extraction of fossil fuels, and because of this one in four carbon emissions comes from humans. I am aware that Vermont has a goal of making restrictions on fossil fuels and ultimately becoming 90 percent renewable by 2050. Every student in Vermont should be aware of this goal. I strongly urge the United States government to contribute to that further by promoting this kind of discussion within classrooms.

New York City Councilman Donovan Richards, a man on the panel for 350.org, spoke to us the night before the march, and his words stuck with me. “Rulership does not coincide with leadership.” The streets of Manhattan were full of leaders on Sunday, September 21, and our desire was to influence our rulers. However, if our voice is transmitted to our “rulers” such as yourself, our governments can “lead” us into a more sustainable and renewable world.

CAROLINE ARTHAUD, CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, members of Congress, and fellow Americans:

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.” At this time, it is my duty to lead this country towards such a place. I stand here today to address our successes, but also our deficits. Although Americans have many reasons to be proud of our accomplishments, it is unrealistic and inaccurate to declare ourselves flawless. We must muster the courage to confront the issues that hold us back.

Although the unemployment rate has decreased from 9.7 percent in 2010 to 5.8 percent in November of 2014, there are still 9 million

Americans without jobs. This is not acceptable.

Beyond this, our precious environment is deteriorating. What many seem to struggle to understand is that the gradual warming of the earth is not an issue affecting only polar bears and penguins, but a growing danger to humans, as well.

To begin to address issues of unemployment and environment, it is important that we, the American people, do our part to raise awareness and call for action. America needs to initiate large-scale production of renewable energy sources. This will help us in two ways: it will expand employment and create new jobs, and it will also transition this country from dependence on pollution-causing energy sources to cleaner solutions. We can sleep easier knowing that we have stopped engaging in a process sure to leave our children and grandchildren with a world too far gone to rehabilitate.

Yet, another issue has escalated severely in recent years. It is one that has resulted in the violent deaths of 20 innocent six-year-olds in 2012, and that continues to take the lives of an average of 289 Americans daily. Many of us don't want to look at the problem of gun violence, but it has become something we can no longer ignore. We must formulate legislation that demands the renewal of gun permits on a regular basis, and work to improve the quality of mental health treatment. We must insist upon implementing stricter background checks on anyone wishing to bear weapons.

Change is difficult. It's difficult on an individual basis, and vastly more difficult on a national one. However, I believe that the ability to change is a big part of what has made this nation so great. Americans are resilient and creative, and I believe that if we set our minds to it, we can improve the state of our union. I call upon you, all of you, to help continue the legacy of this remarkable country by working with me to better the lives of all Americans. Unemployment, environmental degradation, and gun violence are a lot to take on; however, we live in a country capable of anything.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

HAR WA BI, WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

"There is a lot that happens around the world we cannot control. We cannot stop earthquakes, we cannot prevent droughts, and we cannot prevent all conflict, but when we know where the hungry, the homeless and the sick exist, then we can help," says Jan Schakowsky, the U.S. Representative from Illinois. We can't help what nature creates, but being homeless is not nature. It is produced by humans and only humans can erase it. It is our nation's fault for letting people become homeless and live in poverty. We need to help the homeless and not let the poor become homeless.

According to studentsagainstthunger.org in United States, each year more than 3.5 million people become homeless. They are forced to sleep in parks, under bridges, in shelters or cars. In fact, 35 percent of the homeless population are families with children, which is the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. And, 25 percent of the homeless population suffer from some form of mental illness. According to the feedingamerica.org, 45.3 percent of the people lived in poverty in 2013. This included 26.4 million people ages 18 to 64, 4.7 million children under the age of 18, and 4.2 million seniors 65 and older.

I believe poverty happens in the United States because housing and hospital bills are too expensive. Lower-income workers cannot afford food and shelter. After we pay for housing, nothing is left for us. We don't have

a higher income, we have food stamps which are low because the government cut it off, including for my family. And, my mom is the only one who works. According to homeaid.org, some part of the homelessness is caused by the loss of loved ones, job loss, domestic violence, divorce and family disputes. Other impairments such as depression, untreated mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder, and physical disabilities are also responsible for a large portion of the homeless. I want government to help those people who need and try to stop it from happening, and to make our nation become better.

I believe only government can decrease homelessness and help to increase the income, which all poor people need. We need to decrease the cost of hospitals or anything that costs a lot. Please help us poor and homeless because the government is our only hope. We will be waiting for the results of our government's actions.

PETER CAMARDO, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

A democracy is a government ruled by the people. In a democracy, the citizens hold the responsibility of making decisions. This is why United States of America has been successful throughout history. A democracy is the most productive way to run society when its citizens are engaged, but it loses its superiority when the population is plagued by ignorance.

In my lifetime, Americans have been fortunate to live on our homeland without major threat to our national security. We have grown accustomed to lives of guaranteed safety. Unfortunately with this privilege, we have begun to feel entitled and to neglect our responsibility as American citizens. Issues of great concern are being ignored by the American population as if they mean nothing. Americans are sitting back and waiting for others to take action while grave matters are left undebated by the American public. I think back to President Kennedy's inaugural speech, and when he said the famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." It is important that we American citizens remind ourselves of these words in everything we do, and to remember that our government is built upon the strong, independent voices that make up a democracy.

I don't believe there is one significant issue concerning the United States that is more urgent than the rest. Each issue we face is vital for our nation to address appropriately. Regardless of which issue we undertake at which time, the first step to solving it is to become educated, and to stop ignoring problems just because they are not affecting us directly. All the members of a democracy must understand a conflict before it can be solved. In an age where people have infinite information at their fingertips, it can be easy to lose sight of important information. We must be educated before we can solve our issues of today.

The responsibility to educate the public lies with the elected members of our government. It is important for our government to be straightforward and honest. It is important that when there are protests and movements the voices of the American people are heard and represented. Most importantly, the United States Congress should set an example for leadership and communication, and should inspire the people of the United States through proactive legislation and positive inter-party communication.

We are the greatest nation on earth. We are far too experienced and wise to get caught up in a bipartisan conflict. When we get caught up in a battle with ourselves, it dejects us. The reason why the citizens of

America have lost a sense of American pride is because our leaders seem to have lost a sense of purpose. The objective of our government is to, "Establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity," and the government should put aside their personal beliefs in an effort to make that happen.

TAYLOR DEVANEY, MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

President Obama once said that, "The nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous", and as a young Vermonter, I agree with this statement. I am concerned with the state of our union due to the ever-growing, unequal wealth distribution. As the rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and in many situations wealth distribution gets ignored. The middle class population used to be the backbone of the nation, but every year it gets harder to make ends meet, as they slide lower down the economic class scale. America leads the world in the widest gap between the have and have nots, making the idea of America being the land of opportunity seem more of an unlikely dream.

The most recent studies from the Federal Reserve show that a mere 3 percent of American families own 54 percent of the wealth in the United States. The unbalanced wealth distribution is dangerous for the nation as a whole. Economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman state that in their research that the wealth distribution has grown to the same levels as in the 1920's. The top 1 percent owns upwards of 40 percent of the wealth in the United States. As a nation, we have experienced the disastrous effects of an economic crash during the Great Depression, due to unbalanced wealth. We as a nation have failed to learn from our mistakes and are continuing down a dangerous path. The middle class is still at risk for being hurt the most, as they are left to clean up the mess of the high rollers. An unfair task when their wages remain stagnant, as the profits and wages soar for those at the top of the corrupted corporate ladder. The hard working American people do not deserve to struggle and something must be done.

The mega-rich are not paying appropriate amount of taxes for their wealth, making the middle and lower class make up for the difference. Many of the people who control the tax rates are also the ones who make the most. Members of Congress are creating laws to benefit themselves. Big money and government fit together well, for politicians look for the wealthy to support them financially.

We can no longer only provide for wealthy men and women who indirectly control our government. Creating a scaled taxation system will help balance the wealth in the nation. Making sure the wealthy are paying their fair share is key to balancing out our nation's prosperity. The U.S. can take note from the most famous, and down to Earth business from Vermont, Ben & Jerry's. This company had a system of a pay ratio between the highest paid employee and the lowest paid employee of 5 to 1 in its early years. These numbers are relatively small, but scaling them could make an impact on businesses today. Unequal wealth distribution benefits only a small portion of the country and will be the cause of a failed economy.

CONNOR DROWN, WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

America. Home of the brave and land of the free. It is at its heart known as a free country, with opportunity just waiting for someone to snatch it up for themselves. It is a land where one desires the "American

Dream." Unfortunately, this is not remotely possible, and many citizens of the United States have difficulties living in this country. The United States of America is a great country to live in, if not the best, but is also far from perfect.

Everything in America could be improved in one way or the other. Education and health care are huge government issues that need improvement in order to make the United States of America a more suitable place to live.

Firstly, education in America is one of if not the most important factors to a successful career and life for US citizens. Getting a high school diploma is still very important, but it is now becoming more and more of a necessity to attend college and get a degree. According to usnews.com, the value of a college degree is greater than it has been in nearly half a century, at least when compared to the prospect of not getting a degree. Among millennials ages 25 to 32, median annual earnings for fulltime working college degree holders are \$17,500 greater than for those with high school diplomas only. The only problem is that college has increasingly become less and less affordable.

According to the College Board, the average cost of tuition and fees for the 2013–2014 academic year was \$30,094 at private colleges, \$8,893 for state residents at public colleges, and \$22,203 for out-of-state residents attending public universities. Most Americans don't even consider public schools, which are most often referred to as the least expensive, affordable. According to the Huffington Post, 62 percent said they believe most people are not able to afford the cost of a public college education. If the majority of America could afford college to achieve their career goals, America will be a better and more successful country. If something such as raising taxes benefits colleges in that it will be more affordable, America will have more opportunity to strive for success.

Health care is another issue that I feel should be mentioned. It is said that President Obama and the United States in general wants to make healthcare more affordable to everyone. Government run health care systems, such as Obamacare, are free and low-cost government run programs that result in higher costs and everyone receiving the same poor quality health care. Health care should remain privatized so that the people who may need better health care and can also afford it without a huge deductible may receive it.

In conclusion, ensuring that health care remains the same and reducing the cost of education will undeniably improve America.

SPENCER ECKERT, WOODSTOCK UNION HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

Remember when you got your first job? I'm sure it was an exciting and proud moment. It could be that you weren't even concerned about your hourly pay, but as time went by, I'm certain that changed and you realized that you work hard and want to be compensated for that. In today's society, it can be hard to earn a good living wage from a "decent" job. But for many people, they don't get good pay even when they should. The low minimum wage today makes it difficult for people to survive and make a living.

There are a number of compelling reasons to increase the minimum wage. Let's begin with the economy. It's simple; raising the minimum wage would have a positive effect on the economy by giving workers more money to spend. It would be good to raise the minimum wage to \$15 because there would be more money being pumped into the economy. If workers get paid more, then they are happier and with a better mood

they will want to spend more. It gives people the confidence to spend more and when they spend more they are fueling the economy. "A raise for minimum wage earners will put more money in more families' pockets, which will be spent on goods and services, stimulating economic growth locally and nationally," according to the "Minimum Wage Mythbusters."

Increasing minimum wage has a positive impact on the working family. It helps them to make ends meet, and at the same time enables them to spend some money. When they spend money, they are fueling the economy.

Raising the minimum wage would not cause any job loss or unemployment, and most work places would not go out of business if they were to raise the minimum wage. In fact there would probably be less turnover. Therefore, companies would reduce the amount of money they spend on training. If companies compensate their employees with better wages than those employees are happier and more committed to that company. So raising the minimum wage can have a positive effect on companies. "Raising the minimum wage would be good for our economy. A higher minimum wage not only increases workers' incomes—which is sorely needed to boost demand and get the economy going—but it also reduces turnover, cuts the costs that low-paid employers impose on taxpayers, and pushes businesses toward a high-road, high-human-capital model." (Said T. William Lester, David Madland, and Jackie Odum, in their article *Raising the Minimum Wage Would Help, Not Hurt, Our Economy*)

One reason why the minimum wage should be increased to \$15 is because it would help a lot of people get out of the poverty level. Too many people in the country who work at minimum wage jobs currently depend on the government for other help. People subscribe to government programs such as food stamps and school breakfast and lunch programs, just to name a few. "According to a Michigan survey shows that families who work at fast food businesses are much more likely to enroll in safety net programs than the workforce as a whole, such as food stamps."

Another reason why the minimum wage should be increased to \$15 is because of the positive psychological benefits. It would raise people's self-esteem and self-worth and would also allow children in these poverty-level homes to have better opportunities in the future. If these children are able to improve their performance in school, then they are likely to continue education which would allow them to pursue better paying jobs in the future. If they have better paying jobs, they are no longer on government programs and they have the opportunity and confidence to spend money which fuel the economy. It is a positive cycle. "A raise in the minimum wage would not only help many families escape or avoid poverty, but could also significantly boost their children's academic performance and future adult earnings," said Yannet M. Lathrop, a Policy Analyst who has conducted studies on raising the minimum wage.

There really is no downside to raising the minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 would be good for employers, workers, families, and the economy. Raising the minimum wage would lead to these dramatic outcomes: getting families out of poverty, giving children a better education and future, giving employers committed workers, putting more money into the economy, giving people the confidence to spend more and making people happy.

JACOB GALLOW, MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL (FINALIST)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau stated, "A man is born free, but everywhere we are in chains."

Freedom is something everyone seeks, but most will never experience it. Given more power, the government becomes a wolf among sheep. People flock to the sight of freedom, only to see that even something so great has its limits. Governments tend to give more things to the people, things to give them a sense of security, a place to sleep, somewhere to work, to do as they wish. Those things come at a price, the price of freedom. The more the people receive, especially on the topic of security, the more liberties are contracted.

Are we truly free? America sits in the shadow of threats every day, for there will always be some person who despises the place we call home. Security is something we, as Americans, take for granted. While we sit in the shadows, not even aware of it, brave men and women risk their lives and die every day for the security of their homeland, wishing for a safe place for their friends and family to live. Yet, here we sit in the symbolic country of freedom, with someone always looking over our shoulder. That security we take for granted tends to take away the liberties and freedoms we were given many years ago. The more of a grip the government has on its people, the more the people are caged.

Our troops are out fighting for our government, and our government's wishes, but have we ever stopped to think of what our own troops went through? According to Veteran's Inc., around 529,000 and 840,000 veterans are homeless each year, one in ten veterans are disabled related to war injuries. According to CNN, 22 veterans take their own lives each and every day, some resulting from PTSD, a disorder soldiers get after experiencing the horrors of war. Veteran unemployment rate is another issue among all of these. What can we, as Americans, do to help our Veterans. We surely are not doing enough, and those numbers keep climbing. What about those families of soldiers, what do they have to go through each and every day with a spouse, parent, or sibling off at war, fighting people because our governments wants to be "involved."

We don't need to be caught in everyone else's business, unless it becomes our business, and if we do get involved, we need to back up our soldiers first. Our country had to solve our own problems in 1861–1865, let others do the same.

Freedom isn't really free. Here in America, we are promised freedom, but the securities we receive and the democracy we spread binds us in chains, not allowing us to roam free. Sure there needs to be laws enforced, yes there needs to be security, but we need freedom too. Our government needs to focus on our country. Will we as Americans allow the anaconda, known as the government, to strangle us, the people, as mice?•

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON FOOTBALL TEAM

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the University of Oregon's football team for its tremendous season. The Fighting Ducks of Oregon accumulated 13 wins with only 2 losses this year, which accounts for the most wins in team history. This season culminated with the Ducks winning their 11th Pac-12 Conference championship, playing in the first NCAA college football playoff, winning their third-ever Rose Bowl and reaching the National Championship game. It is truly a great year to be a Duck.

Recognition should not only be given to this football team's success on the