

was created. They said that it will never last; it will never stay. Eventually, public sentiment changed and people realized Social Security was critically important for America.

The same thing was true for Medicare. There were those who said: Socialized medicine, you have to get rid of it. Now, 60 years later, 50 years later, they understand it is part of America. For millions of Americans, it is critically important. Medicaid, the same thing.

I hope today will be that turning point on the Affordable Care Act, where we decide on a bipartisan basis that this is part of our future, providing health insurance for uninsured Americans, doing it in a fair way, and particularly for those in lower income situations.

This was a historic decision, King v. Burwell, at the Supreme Court—6 to 3. A decisive majority opinion said the Affordable Care Act is legal and constitutional and should move forward. I hope that message makes it across the street over to the Halls of Congress.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS V. INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT, INC.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning, the Supreme Court also announced its decision in Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.

In a major victory for the millions of Americans who rely on the protections of the Fair Housing Act to challenge unfair, discriminatory housing practices, the Court held that disparate impact claims are permissible under the law.

The Fair Housing Act was a landmark civil rights bill passed in 1968 to combat widespread housing discrimination. Under the disparate impact doctrine, the law allows plaintiffs to challenge housing policies that have a “disproportionally adverse effect on minorities,” without proving discriminatory intent.

Housing discrimination is rarely as overt today as it was in the 1960s, and disparate impact claims thus play an important role in preventing housing segregation. Federal appeals courts across the country have long held that these types of claims are permissible and constitutional. Today, the Supreme Court rightfully affirmed this principle.

As Justice Kennedy acknowledged in the opinion, the Fair Housing Act plays a “continuing role in moving the Nation toward a more integrated society.”

This past week has reminded us that we have much to accomplish in creating a more just and equal society. On issues ranging from voting rights to mass incarceration, there are fundamental disparities that we must address.

Thankfully, the Court’s ruling today ensures that the full protections of the Fair Housing Act remain intact. We must continue to work to prevent discrimination in housing and give all American families access to safe, affordable homes in inclusive, prosperous communities.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING MAJOR KENNETH M. SLYE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a very dear friend of mine who has sadly passed away. MAJ Ken Slye, retired from both the U.S. Army and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, died on June 24, 2015, at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville. He was 81 years old.

Ken was a retired master Army aviator who did two combat tours in Vietnam, flying both Chinook and Huey helicopters. After his retirement from the Army, Ken was very active in the local Louisville military community as well as that of Fort Knox. He was a past chairman of the Louisville Armed Forces Committee; a four-times past president of the Louisville Chapter, Military Officers Association of America; a member of VFW 1170 Middletown; of the DAV; and of the American Legion G.I. Joe Post 244 in Jeffersonton.

Ken served on the Veteran Experience Board at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center, and in fact he and fellow veteran Carl Kaelin were instrumental in getting the medical center named after Kentucky’s own World War I-era vet, Robley Rex. Ken was the recipient of the 2015 Louisville Armed Forces Patriot Award just this past May.

Ken was also heavily involved with professional tennis as an international chair umpire, and he served in the chair in matches all over the United States as well as the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Japan, France, Argentina, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Jamaica. He began his officiating career in 1974 and was a graduate of the first professional tennis officials’ school, in 1976 in Dallas. He chaired matches at the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, the French Open, and the Davis Cup.

Ken officiated in 16 matches with legendary player John McEnroe. Ken was the only Kentuckian to chair the final of a Grand Slam Tennis Tournament. He was the chair umpire for the classic 1980 U.S. Open Men’s Singles Final between McEnroe and Bjorn Borg, watched on television by 20 million fans and 22,000 in the stands at Flush-

ing Meadow. He was the chair umpire at the 1987 Wimbledon semi-final match between Stefan Edberg and Ivan Lendl. Other tennis legends Ken encountered during his career were Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, Ilie Nastase, and Jimmy Connors.

Born in Boston and raised in Wellesley, MA, Ken moved to Louisville because it was the hometown of his wife, Linda. He sang bass with the Louisville Thoroughbred Chorus for 4 years and served as its manager for 6 years. He served for 20 years with the Secretary of Defense’s staff on top of his heroic service with the Army.

Ken is survived by his wife, Linda, as well as his son Scott Slye and daughter Susan Fabiano; his granddaughters Stacey Brandon and Audrey Ribley; his six great-grandchildren, Ashlynn, Will, Addison, Cooper, Scott, and Brystal; and Linda’s son and daughter Jeff Furnish and Meg Furnish.

MAJ Ken Slye bravely served his country in uniform during a time of war, and he served his fellow veterans when he returned home. He will be greatly missed, not only by the military community throughout Kentucky but also by his many friends who knew and loved him.

I am proud to count myself among that group of friends. I relied on Ken’s advice and friendship. I want to extend my deepest condolences to his family in their time of loss. The Commonwealth of Kentucky joins them in mourning this heroic man, patriot, and soldier.

REMEMBERING THOMAS BLAKE RATLIFF

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a very dear friend of mine and a great Kentuckian who has sadly passed away. Thomas Blake Ratliff of Pikeville, a Navy veteran, died on April 20, 2015. He was 88 years old.

Born on May 27, 1926, Tom attended elementary, junior high, and high school at the Pikeville College Academy and graduated in 1944. Upon graduation he joined the Navy and served in the Pacific theater during World War II until being honorably discharged in 1946.

After his naval service, Tom attended Pikeville College and the University of Kentucky, where he received a bachelor of laws in 1951 and a juris doctorate in 1970. Tom and his wife Myrtle returned home to Pikeville after Tom graduated law school, and he practiced law and also became involved in the coal business. Tom also had business interests in hotels, restaurants, the Reynold’s Body Company and in properties in Kentucky and Florida.

Tom was also active in civic affairs and public service. A passionate supporter of the Republican Party, he served in various capacities for the local, State, and national GOP. He was a great supporter of mine and I remember well his enthusiasm and dedication

over the years. He was elected as the Commonwealth attorney for the 35th Judicial Circuit and served in that post from 1964 to 1970. He was also the Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor in 1967.

In addition to his work and positions in politics, Tom gave generously of his time to many worthy causes, including service as the director of the Pikeville Methodist Hospital and as a trustee of Pikeville College. He was the president of the Pikeville Rotary Club and volunteered his time with the Coal Operators Association and the Boy Scouts.

Tom was a Christian who attended Pikeville United Methodist Church. He also served on the church's administrative board. His hobbies included reading, traveling, boating, and being physically active. He loved to travel and had visited all the continents.

Tom is survived by his wife, Myrtle; the two were married on August 21, 1949. He is also survived by his daughters Susan G. Tillotson and Jan E. Sharpe; his sons Kevin N. Ratliff and Chris Ratliff; his grandchildren Elizabeth J. Spraggs, Juliet Kamper, Jonathan K. Wright, Thomas N. Ratliff, Daniel C. Ratliff, and Jordan B. Ratliff; his great-grandchild, Tiara Wright; his sister, Charlene R. Easton; and his brother, Roger E. J. Ratliff.

I want to extend my deepest condolences to Myrtle and to the family in this time of loss. The Commonwealth of Kentucky joins them in mourning this hero and public servant. Tom Ratliff bravely served his country in uniform during World War II, and served his fellow Kentuckians in public office. He was a hero and a patriot who I was proud to know and to call a friend. He will be greatly missed, not only by his family but by his many friends who knew and loved him.

RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF MIRACLE FLIGHTS FOR KIDS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I recognize the 30th anniversary of Miracle Flights for Kids.

Since its founding in southern Nevada in 1985, Miracle Flights for Kids has been providing airline tickets for sick children in low-income families. These flights are truly miracles that allow children to receive the specialized medical care they need and otherwise would not have access to due to distance and travel costs. In the beginning, Miracle Flights for Kids was a small organization that served a handful of local children, but today the organization coordinates hundreds of flights a month, including a record 976 flights in April 2015. To date, Miracle Flights for Kids has coordinated more than 92,000 flights resulting in 50 million miles of travel. These flights have helped to save and improve the quality of life for countless children.

Families from across the country and the world contact Miracle Flights for Kids for assistance, and the organiza-

tion works to ensure eligible children have access to the care they need, regardless of how far away the treatment center is located. They have flown children relatively short distances, such as flights from Nevada to California, and longer distances, including flights from Alaska to Colorado. They have even flown children from as far away as Turkey to Maryland. Miracle Flights for Kids also works to ensure that children can travel back to their treatment center as many times as their doctor deems necessary. For instance, they provided more than 40 flights from Ohio to Texas for one little girl so she could receive the medical attention she required.

Having a sick child is a devastating, trying experience for any parent. The services provided by Miracle Flights for Kids give families some peace-of-mind as they focus on getting their child healthy. I commend Miracle Flights for Kids for 30 years of exceptional service to children and families in Nevada and throughout the world. Their work is truly appreciated and admired, and I wish them continued success for years to come.

RECOGNIZING MARGARET A. FOCARINO AND JAMES D. SMITH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recognize two distinguished public servants who are leaving their positions at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, or USPTO,—Margaret “Peggy” Focarino, Commissioner for Patents, and James D. Smith, Chief Administrative Patent Judge. Both have played critical roles in bringing the USPTO into the 21st century by working tirelessly to implement the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, the most comprehensive update of U.S. patent law since the 1950s. The patent system is one of the cornerstones of our economy. It drives innovation, growth, and job creation. This country has been fortunate to have dedicated leaders such as Ms. Focarino and Mr. Smith in key positions at this crucial Agency.

Peggy Focarino became Commissioner for Patents in 2012, where she has been instrumental in developing and implementing administrative changes made by the Leahy-Smith act. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the patent community while implementing this law is a hallmark of her tenure as Commissioner for Patents. As someone who worked for nearly 6 years to pass comprehensive patent reform legislation, I can attest to the fact that it is not easy to bring all of these stakeholders together and build consensus. The provisions she worked to implement include the transition to first-inventor-to-file and the USPTO's fee-setting authority, but her work encompassed a number of other aspects of the Leahy-Smith act as well.

Ms. Focarino's impressive tenure as Commissioner for Patents likely did not come as a surprise to anyone who

followed her rise within the USPTO. She started at the Agency in 1977 as a patent examiner. In 1997, she was promoted to the senior executive service. Throughout her almost 40 years at the USPTO, she distinguished herself as a leader within the Agency, receiving the Department of Commerce Silver Medal for Leadership in 2010. She also received American University's School of Public Affairs Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership in 2010. While the USPTO will continue to do important work without her, there is little doubt that her leadership will be missed.

James Smith also played a key role in the implementation of the Leahy-Smith act. Mr. Smith became the Chief Administrative Patent Judge in 2011. During his tenure, Mr. Smith worked to implement the postgrant review proceedings the law established. Thanks to Mr. Smith's leadership at the Patent Trial and Appeal Board, these postgrant proceedings have been successful in providing low-cost alternatives to litigation for reviewing the patentability of issued patents. His strong and varied background in the private sector, including time spent working on intellectual property issues at large companies and law firms, served him well as he helped the USPTO implement these essential components of the Leahy-Smith act.

It is always difficult to see good public servants leave their roles. Ms. Focarino and Mr. Smith can look back proudly at their record of public service and point to meaningful accomplishments that have improved the U.S. patent system. I wish them both the best in their new endeavors.

VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I support the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, an important step on the road to protecting the right to vote for all Americans. It responds to a recent Supreme Court ruling that rolled back critical voting protections that had proven effective for decades and that Congress had reauthorized several times.

This landmark legislation would reaffirm the importance of the vote as a pillar of our democracy and restore a powerful shield to combat voting discrimination. I thank Senator LEAHY for his leadership on this bill, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of a bill that protects access to the ballot box for all American citizens.

Mr. President, 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act of 1965, legislation that he called “a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield.” At the time he signed the bill into law, millions of Americans were denied the right to vote based on the color of their skin.