

Americans Act first passed, that we can move rapidly to see it approved by the House of Representatives as well and signed into law by the President.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, 50 years ago this week, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Older Americans Act, which enshrined into law our responsibility for helping seniors live healthier, fuller, and more independent lives. Fifty years later, I am pleased Congress has worked to reauthorize the Older Americans Act to once again uphold that promise of our Nation. And I am pleased we came together in a bipartisan way to provide important support for seniors in my home State of Washington and those across the country.

I especially thank Senators ALEXANDER, SANDERS, and BURR for all of their hard work on this bill. I believe we should be doing everything we can to support seniors so they can lead healthy, independent lives. Improving opportunities for seniors is part of how we can restore some much-needed economic security for them. And it is how we can help ensure our country is working for all Americans, not just the wealthiest few.

But today, far too many seniors find themselves skipping meals or going hungry, instead of getting the nutrition they need. In fact, 9.3 million seniors in our country face the threat of hunger, according to a 2012 report. And in my home State of Washington, 13.5 percent of seniors struggle with hunger.

As if that isn't enough, many seniors face other serious challenges, like elder abuse. That can include mistreatment in a nursing home or financial exploitation. This bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act supports crucial social services and nutrition programs for seniors.

As one example, this bill sustains our investment in Meals on Wheels. In my home State of Washington, more than 460,000 seniors enroll in that program. Meals on Wheels is a critical lifeline for them. It is an important investment for our country. For every dollar we invest in Meals on Wheels, we can save up to \$50 in Medicaid spending, according to a study from the Center for Effective Government. Among other important provisions, the bill also strengthens programs to combat elder abuse.

This bill focuses on the critical importance of both abuse screenings and prevention efforts, and it would improve the response to abuse, neglect, and exploitation in long-term care facilities. It also puts a key emphasis on evidence-based public health programs.

It bolsters transportation programs, and it ensures that OAA programs include a focus on seniors' behavioral health needs. I am proud that this bill is the result of strong bipartisan work. It proves yet again that when Republicans and Democrats work together,

we can get results, so I hope we can build on this progress.

I want to continue to work with Republicans to find common ground and get results for families and communities in Washington State and across the country. And I hope to continue to work on ways to restore economic stability and security to more seniors.

In 1965, at the original signing of the Older Americans Act, President Johnson said the true significance of this bill would be in its results. He said he hoped the bill would, quote, "help us to expand our opportunities for enriching the lives of all of our citizens in our country, now and in the years to come."

Reauthorizing this law will carry out that mission and expand opportunities so more seniors can lead healthy, independent lives. It is an important part of our work to help the economy grow from the middle out, not the top down. It will be another step toward making sure our government is working for all families, not just the wealthiest few.

Today, I call on all my colleagues to support this bill. Let's reauthorize the Older Americans Act and live up to our Nation's responsibility to seniors across the country.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am glad the Senate has turned today to the reauthorization of the programs under the Older Americans Act. For decades, this law has provided community assistance to seniors in underserved and rural areas across the country, but unfortunately, these programs have gone unauthorized since 2011. As our population ages, seniors face an increased need for community resources, which is what makes this bill so important.

The Older Americans Reauthorization Act of 2015 will prioritize funding for crucial community and in-home services that offer the protection and reassurance for seniors requiring specialized care. The bill will reauthorize transportation assistance and home-delivered nutrition programs. It will also strengthen State grants for in-home caregiver support. Through the coordination of community and health care providers, the bill will improve disease promotion services and increase mental health awareness among elderly populations. Furthermore, the legislation will strengthen programs that prevent senior abuse, neglect, and exploitation by holding health facilities and adult care homes accountable for promoting excellent patient care.

These programs have given seniors in Vermont and across the country the chance for independence and wellbeing long after retirement. This is not a partisan issue, but one we can all agree requires our dedication and support. I am pleased to cosponsor this legislation and wish to thank Senators MURRAY, ALEXANDER, SANDERS, and BURR for making this issue a priority this Congress. I am pleased the Senate has passed this legislation, which will help to improve the livelihood of our Nation's seniors.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, once again I see my good friend Senator COLLINS fighting for all of the good people of her State and all of our States and raising important issues—issues that I dealt with, quite honestly, quite a bit when I was attorney general of my State. Exploitation is a horrible practice that takes away the dignity and the opportunity for a healthy life of an elderly American citizen. So I congratulate the Senator from Maine on her fine work, and I pledge my full support as she moves forward with this bill.

I thank the Senator from Maine.

#### HONORING VIETNAM VETERANS AND NORTH DAKOTA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN VIETNAM

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today, as I do most Thursdays in this Senate, I rise to speak about the young men from my State of North Dakota who went to Vietnam and certainly those who died while serving in the Vietnam war. As I have said before, the families of each of these 198 fallen North Dakotans deserve to have America pause to honor and remember each of them.

Before I speak about some of the North Dakotans who are missing or who died during the Vietnam war, I wish to thank Author "Tom" Mandan, a Vietnam veteran from New Town, ND, who is an inspiration to our State and to our country.

In 1966, Tom chose to enlist in the Army. He was stationed in Vietnam as a medic. He volunteered to extend his time in Vietnam twice and spent a total of 3 years there. The Army awarded him with a Purple Heart and Bronze Star with the V device to denote his heroism involving conflict with the armed enemy.

Tom comes from a family who is also an example of service to our country. Tom and his four brothers all served in Vietnam, each one after the other. Previously, their father, Victor Mandan, served our country in World War II.

When Tom returned to the United States from Vietnam, he raised his family and became a teacher. He enjoyed teaching fourth graders in Mandari and teaching the Hidatsa language to elementary and middle school students. Tom retired from teaching and now serves the Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, working full time as tribal liaison for elders and veterans.

Tom is a proud father and proud grandfather, but he is humbled about his important contributions to his tribe, to his State, and to his country.

Tom's first cousin, Myron Johnson, who was like a brother to Tom, also served in Vietnam and was killed in action there. I now would like to talk about Myron and four other young men who didn't come home from the war.

MYRON "CHIEF'S HIGH" JOHNSON

Myron "Chief's High" Johnson was born September 26, 1948. He was from Mandaree and was an enrolled member of the Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation. He served in the Army's 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, Americal Division. Myron died March 28, 1971. He was 22 years old.

He was the sixth of nine children born to Melvin Johnson and Eloise Mandan Johnson. His siblings said that Myron had a magnetic personality and was kind and sincere to everyone who met him. When people reminisce about Myron, they always talk about how much they loved him.

Myron enjoyed riding bucking horses and was a top contender in the American Indian Rodeo Association. He was also a good hunter and a great shot.

In Vietnam, Myron's best friend Richard Boehm and 32 other American soldiers were killed in action when Firebase Mary Ann was attacked. Myron received many medals for his honorable and distinguished service in Vietnam.

Diane Johnson is Myron's sister and my great friend. Diane said that after Myron's death, he was escorted by his first cousin, John Morsette, who, in the Indian way, was Myron's brother. John Morsette served two tours in Vietnam and also was highly decorated. John told Diane that taking Myron home was the hardest thing he ever did. The trail of cars accompanying Myron from the Minot Airport back to his home in Mandaree was miles long.

In addition to his parents and siblings, Myron left his wife Sharol and daughter Melanie. Myron's family said that his death left a permanent scarred hole that can never be filled. They will continue to honor veterans and honor Myron for giving his life for his country.

The Mandaree American Legion Post 271 is named after Myron and Myron's nephew, Nathan Good Iron, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2006.

The Mandaree American Legion Post honors me consistently by allowing me to enter with their shawl at American pow-wows and honors me by allowing me to walk with Nathan's mother Harriet as we honor her as a Gold Star Mother.

For over 30 years, Myron's mother, despite her limited resources, honored Myron by giving away star quilts and shawls she made in Myron's name. These giveaways were held throughout the years at various flag raisings, various pow-wows, and Memorial Day and Veterans Day services.

On Myron's mother's death bed, she looked up and smiled and said in her native language, "Oh my son, you're here. You've finally come to see me."

FRANCIS DOWLING

Francis Dowling was from Coopers-town, and he was born July 13, 1929. He served as a sergeant major in the Army's First Infantry Division. Francis was 38 years old when he died on October 17, 1967.

Francis was one of eight children. His two brothers also served in the Vietnam war—George in the Air Force and Forrest in the Marines. We were unable to reach any of Francis's family members, but according to a remembrance written by Jim Shelton, who served with him, Francis was a brave and a loyal soldier. Jim described Francis as "tall, handsome, and professional," with a strong sense of humor.

Michael Meyers also served with Francis, and he recalls that Francis was easily 6 feet 6 inches tall and was very muscular. Michael said, "He was so big people thought he was mean, but 97 percent of the time he had a big smile on his face."

Francis died during an ambush when he was trying to shield his wounded commanding officer from further fire. Francis is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

GLENN MAIER

Glenn Maier was from Bismarck and was born December 31, 1949. He served in the Navy and was trained as a fireman. Glenn died July 11, 1970, when he was 20 years old.

This Senator has the pleasure of knowing Glenn's family. His parents, Vi and Chuck Tracy, lived just two doors down from my house where I raised my family in Mandan.

Glenn's father, Ervin Maier, served our country in the military and died when Glenn was very young. Vi later married Chuck Tracy, and they raised Glenn together. Vi and Chuck also gave Glenn a brother, Bob, and a sister, Sue. Bob and Sue said that Glenn was a happy-go-lucky guy. They remember him riding his Vespa scooter and enjoying time with his friends and especially playing a lot of pinochle.

Glenn's sister Sue chuckles when she thinks about growing up and Glenn not knowing how to swim. Even though Sue was younger by 6 years, she tried to teach him how to swim in the small swimming holes on the sandbars of the Missouri River. When Glenn decided to enlist in the Navy, she joked with him that he was foolish, but he assured her that the Navy would make sure he could swim.

Glenn's brother Bob is grateful for meeting other men who served with Glenn in the Navy. They told Bob stories about Glenn's service, like how despite being trained in the Navy as a firefighter, Glenn served on a swift boat in brown waters running machine guns. They said they always requested Glenn for missions because he was so good with .50-caliber machine guns. The month he was killed, he was scheduled to leave Vietnam to train in the United States as a Navy SEAL.

JOHN TAGUE

John Tague was from Burlington. He was born December 2, 1945. John served in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. He was 22 years old when he died on June 16, 1968.

He was the oldest child in his family, and he had three sisters: Alice, Georgia, and Jody. Alice and Georgia said

that John loved to hunt and fish and did so at every opportunity. His golden retriever followed him everywhere, especially when he went hunting.

After high school, John joined the Job Corps, where he helped teach others about life and taking care of themselves. The Wahpeton Job Corps honored John for his outstanding work by naming a building after him. When that facility closed, Jobs Corps gave John's family the building sign with John's name.

John's sisters appreciate that their former Des Lacs Burlington High School classmates are planning to honor John in a parade float this summer.

In Vietnam, John served as a field communications electronics equipment mechanic. John was about 6 months into his tour of duty when he was severely burned. Shortly thereafter, he was flown to Japan, where he died of his injuries. He was laid to rest in Rose Hill Memorial Park in Minot.

LOWELL EINARSON

Lowell Einarson was from Bantry and was born March 18, 1938. He served in the Navy as a shipfitter. Lowell was 28 years old when he died on September 1, 1966.

Lowell and his sister Marilyn were the children of immigrants from Iceland, Joe and Sophie Einarson. They grew up on a small farm outside of Bantry.

Lowell's niece Vonda remembers hearing her mother Marilyn telling stories about how she and Lowell traveled to school in the winter by cross-country skiing. Marilyn told Vonda that Lowell was a strong young man who watched over her and took care of her, taking care of the many chores, especially after Marilyn was diagnosed with polio at age 7.

Shortly after completing high school, Lowell enlisted in the Navy. He served for 10 years until he died of a heart attack during the early part of the Vietnam war.

Marilyn cherished the three sets of china Lowell brought home for her, their mother, and for himself. Sadly, Marilyn lost her belongings, including Lowell's china, when her home burned down in the 1970s.

Lowell's niece Sue keeps a rubbing of Lowell's name etched on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, and shared that several family members have said that Lowell's nephew Mitch resembles Lowell.

I continue to speak here on the floor of the U.S. Senate about the lives and deaths of North Dakotans who died while serving in the war because these men remain in our hearts, and they certainly remain in the hearts of the wonderful families we have had an opportunity to get to know during our work on this project.

The 2012 Presidential Proclamation on the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War states:

In the reflection of The Wall, we see the military family members and veterans who

carry a pain that may never fade. May they find peace in knowing their loved ones endure, not only in medals and memories, but in the hearts of all Americans, who are forever grateful for their service, valor, and sacrifice.

It is so important that we never forget the sacrifice of those who served in Vietnam or the sacrifice of those who serve today, and that is why I consider it such a privilege to tell the stories of those who did not make it home and listen to the stories of those who did.

I want to share with you a song that was sung at the recent Vietnam Memorial Exhibit at the Fargo Air Museum in May. I was really moved by a local poet and local performing artist, Shaun Schipper, who was able to sing this song to honor those who served, and I would like to read the lyrics of his song, which is called "Nineteen Years Old." I am not going to sing it, and all of you should be very excited that I am not singing it. I couldn't do justice to the words he wrote.

He wrote:

nineteen years old six months from prom  
out in a jungle in Vietnam  
so scared don't wanna die  
thinking bout home, tears in my eyes  
what are we fighting for, I'm so sick of war  
I bet the guys on the other side  
wanna go home like I do  
miss your mom and dad, the life I had  
I pray to God I'll get back home again  
to be with you  
search and destroy, kill or be killed  
mayhem out here in the battlefield  
adrenaline flowing another sleepless night  
holding my M16, ready for a fight  
here in the trenches fear everywhere  
death and destruction smoke in the air  
mortars grenades deafening sounds  
shrapnel and bullets flying all around  
praying to God calling for mom's  
another buddy dies in Vietnam  
another buddy dies in Vietnam  
and it goes on and on and on and on  
what are we fighting for, I am so sick of war  
I bet the guys on the other side  
Wanna go home like I do

I want to thank him, and I know he was greatly moved by and inspired to write this song by encountering a Vietnam vet. I think all of us who have had those experiences meeting veterans and people who serve can't help but be moved by the quality of their continued devotion to their brothers-in-arms but also the quality of their service.

#### CONNECT WITH VETERANS ACT

So I was moved to doing something for veterans, making sure that our veterans have an opportunity when they return home to basically reconnect with their families. So while each week I come to the Senate floor to honor the persons who gave their lives in the Vietnam war, to truly honor them and our current servicemembers and veterans, we have to make real changes to better support them.

Today I am proud to reintroduce a bipartisan bill with Senators MORAN, KING, and BOOZMAN that would better connect our Nation's new veterans with the services, resources, and benefits that are available right at home in their communities. My Connect With

Veterans Act, S. 1797, aims to help servicemembers transitioning to civilian life after they separate from the military and begin to settle into their communities.

Organizations, such as the Association of Defense Communities, have stated that the most important part of the transition from servicemember to civilian comes in the short period of time after that servicemember leaves the military. We need to make sure it is effective and successful, and there is more we could do to accomplish that goal.

Too often, these veterans do not have access to the basic information on local services, and many communities have few ways to connect with them. I have traveled across North Dakota and listened to our veterans. I hear time and time again about the need for veterans to have more information on services and opportunities available to them at the local level.

My Connect With Veterans Act would provide these veterans with better access to that information by making it easier for cities, counties, and tribes to interact directly with them. It is a simple but commonsense bill. Participation, No. 1, is completely voluntary. Transitioning servicemembers will be given the option to share their contact information with communities in which they intend to live after completing military service.

Interested cities, counties, and tribes will be able to request that contact information from a secure directory maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs so they can provide the information. Integrating back into civilian life may be particularly difficult for those living in rural communities, like so many of the communities in my home State of North Dakota, as they often have fewer resources and access to less services.

As a study from 2014 shows, half of the veterans polled from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan said they are having difficulty adjusting to civilian life. This reasonable solution would help change that by allowing local communities to connect with new veterans at the earliest possible point in the transition process. With 550 servicemembers transitioning daily—I want to repeat that—550 servicemembers transitioning daily nationwide out of the military and with nearly 250,000 service men and women expected to leave military service over the next 5 years, we have to prepare.

We have to say thank you by making sure they get the services they have earned and that we can connect them with communities where they can continue to participate and serve their country and their communities. I know from talking to North Dakotans that this bill will especially benefit communities in my State that have unmet employment needs.

As you can imagine, over 20,000 jobs go unfilled, and we have all of these trained servicemembers who are com-

ing out of the military who would be just excellent additions to our North Dakota community. So whether it is employment or health care or family support services, we have to do better. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this. We have to have a plan for our servicemembers. I think connecting them with their community is a great plan.

#### EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Finally, Mr. President, I would just like to give a little update on what has been happening since we have basically allowed the charter of the Ex-Im Bank to expire. Just as we predicted, that unilateral disarmament in our trade financing opportunities would open the door for opportunities in other countries. We are seeing more and more this delay in basically having a fully functioning Ex-Im Bank is already costing jobs and opportunities in our State.

So I want to reinforce that, not by just my words but talk about what is being said about the U.S. Export-Import Bank being shut down as what is good for China and bad for our competitiveness. Today, the Business Standard printed an interview with the head of the Export-Import Bank of India, who said that with U.S. Ex-Im Bank closing down, we would now have more markets because Indian products are going to compete with U.S. products, and now that competition will go away.

In a recent Reuters article, the chief risk analyst of the China Export-Import Bank said that the end of the American Export-Import Bank would help China be more competitive. He said, "With respect to competition in strategy and policies between the U.S. and China, this is a good thing" for China.

Another recent article said China's central bank is injecting \$32 billion into the China Development Bank and \$30 billion into the Export-Import Bank of China. We are seeing very similar growth in the Export-Import Bank of India.

So I would suggest, if we truly want to remain a global competitor, if we truly want to access an international market where we have—in fact, 95 percent of all consumers live outside our country. If we don't have access to those markets and if we are not competing on a level playing field, it is going to cost American business, including American small business, opportunities—opportunities for exports, opportunities for profitability. But equally important, it is going to cost American jobs. So sooner rather than later we expect we will have a vote on reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank.

I know we continue to see challenges to having that vote. We continue to see challenges to this institution. But I will tell you that many small businesses in my State are contacting us, wondering why in the world we would