

JIM LANGEVIN is living proof of the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a champion of expanded opportunity for people with disabilities. He fought hard for the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. He is founder and cochairman of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus in Congress. And he is a living example to his colleagues that a disability need not be a limitation. Americans of every level of ability are better off for JIM's passion and determination.

For 25 years, as the Americans with Disabilities Act removed barriers to buildings and transportation, it eliminated obstacles that once kept people from contributing to our society, growing our economy, and realizing their dreams. The equality of opportunity embodied in this law is at the very heart of our American notion of liberty. There is still work to be done, but we should cheer how far we have come, and rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the promise of the ADA. This is truly the work of forming a more perfect union.

RECOGNIZING THE KEEP THE
SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE COALITION
AND BRIGADIER GENERAL
JAMES B. THAYER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as our Nation commemorates the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, I would like to recognize and honor the achievements of the Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive coalition, as well as the remarkable legacy of BG James B. Thayer, Sr. I am proud to speak today in recognition of the devotion exhibited by the Oregon Spirit of '45 organization, and by one of Oregon's finest.

Over the past 5 years, the Keep the Spirit of '45 coalition has been instrumental in convincing Congress, and various State legislatures, to designate an annual Spirit of '45 Day in August. I am incredibly proud that Oregon is our Nation's first State to legislate a permanent State Spirit of '45 Day to honor the valiant men and women who served on the battlefields and on America's home front. However, I am even more proud of Governor Brown's recent decision to designate the week of August 9-16 to be WWII 70th Anniversary Spirit of '45 Commemorative Week, a period of profound appreciation and reflection for the actions of a truly inspirational generation.

It has been wonderful to witness the hard work of Oregon's Spirit of '45 organization this year. From six performances across the State by Oregon's 234th Army Band to wreath laying ceremonies, all of the events took an extraordinary amount of planning and initiative. Oregon has truly developed a unique State plan to commemorate the end of WWII; a plan that not only involves an unprecedented concert tour, but that also includes a worldwide tribute coordinated with WWII allies. I also look forward to what is unfolding on the national level: the fly-

overs by WWII aircraft, the swing dances and concerts, and the performance of "Taps" during a wreath laying ceremony that will bring many great Nations together. Across Oregon and the United States, younger generations will truly appreciate our Nation's successful efforts to defend freedom worldwide, as well as the 70th anniversary of VJ Day—which marked the end of the conflict on August 14, 1945.

As I recognize the efforts of the Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive coalition, I must also express my gratitude for General Thayer, who serves as the coalition's ground forces spokesperson in Oregon. He has served as a guiding force behind the Spirit of '45 organization in Oregon. The recipient of numerous military awards, including the Silver and Bronze Stars, General Thayer helped save the lives of over 15,000 Hungarian Jewish refugees. But his legacy does not end there. Following his heroic liberation of the Nazi Death Camp Gunskirchen-Lager, General Thayer served in the Oregon State Defense Force, eventually ascending to the rank of commander. His willingness to serve his country after WWII, and work his way through the ranks, as well as his distinguished civilian career, speaks highly of his character.

It is our Nation's responsibility to ensure that the men and women who stand by our country are honored for their individual and collective sacrifices. Observing the Spirit of '45 Day begins the process of properly commemorating the sacrifices of our Nation's veterans and home front, at a time when democracy and human rights were threatened around the world.

It is also an opportunity for us to remember the shared sacrifice, commitment to service to community and country, and national unity of our WWII generation so that their example will continue to inspire future generations of Americans, especially the youth of our country.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL LEON
PARROTT

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the outstanding career of COL Leon Parrott, District Commander of the Huntington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Since the beginning of his tenure, Colonel Parrott has dutifully served our great State and was honored earlier this month during a Change of Command ceremony in Huntington.

As District Commander, his jurisdiction encompassed an area of approximately 45,000 square miles in 5 States—West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and North Carolina. The District's staff of more than 800 employees supports their mission of operating and maintaining 35 multi-purpose reservoirs and 9 dams in addition to providing flood damage reduction, commercial navigation, recreation, and water supply protection. Colonel

Parrott and his staff oversaw significant planning, design and construction efforts that imitated the replacement of outdated navigation structures, dam safety measures and other significant water resource challenges including emergency management.

Throughout his career, Colonel Parrott has held a variety of command and staff assignments including: platoon leader, company executive officer and construction officer with the 94th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade and 249th Engineer Battalion; battalion maintenance officer and company commander with the 37th Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade; assistant construction and operations officer with the 416th Engineering Command; environmental project officer and district executive officer, Europe District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; battalion operations and executive officer with the 1st Battalion, 395th Engineer Regiment; group engineer with the 5th Special Forces Group, deputy and then chief of the Emergency Operations Center for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Commander of the 326th Engineer Battalion; deputy engineer for installations, Environment and Civil/Military Operations, U.S. European Command; chief of engineering at the Defense Intelligence Agency; and, most recently, as corps engineer of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Colonel Parrott is an outstanding soldier, friend, husband, father and student. A 1988 graduate of the Citadel, he holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering as well as master's degree from the University of Phoenix and the U.S. Army War College. In addition, Colonel Parrott has received numerous awards for his heroism and military duty.

I have had the honor to work with him as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and now in the U.S. Senate. During that time, I have come to admire his dedication and selfless commitment to the mission of the Huntington Corps and its employees. I would like to wish Colonel Parrott and his wife Judy well in his next command at the North Atlantic Division of USACE in Brooklyn, NY, where he will serve as deputy division commander. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Colonel Parrott for his service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING MICHAEL
HERNANDEZ

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Michael Hernandez on his retirement after serving as Reno fire chief for over 5 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to creating a safe environment throughout Reno.

Mr. Hernandez stands as a shining example of someone who has truly devoted his life to serving his local community. He earned a bachelor of science in government and a master of education from Texas A&M University. He later obtained his executive fire officer credential from the National Fire Academy. Mr. Hernandez began his fire service career over 30 years ago as a firefighter medic. Throughout his tenure, he worked in every division of fire services, including emergency operations, training, emergency medical service, emergency operations center management, and the fire prevention bureau. He advanced in his job with diligence, applying knowledge from each division to his work. Mr. Hernandez is truly a role model in the fire services community throughout Reno and across the silver State.

In March of 2010, Mr. Hernandez was named Reno fire chief. Along with the position, he gained responsibility for the department's response to fires, natural and manmade disasters, and emergency medical calls. He worked tirelessly to ensure that the Reno Fire Department maintained excellent fire services for Nevada residents, even in some of the most tumultuous economic times. As chief, Mr. Hernandez provided fellow firefighters with the training and tools necessary to keep our local community safe. Mr. Hernandez is also a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Alumni Association, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Nevada Fire Chiefs Association. I am grateful for all Mr. Hernandez has done for the City of Reno.

It is the brave men and women who serve in our local fire departments that help keep our communities safe. These heroes selflessly put their lives on the line every day. I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Hernandez for his courageous contributions to the people of Reno and to the silver State. His sacrifice and courage earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly put their lives on the line to benefit others.

Mr. Hernandez has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the Reno Fire Department. I am both humbled and honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Hernandez on his retirement, and I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada a safer place. I offer him my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. GERALD M. CROSS

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I recognize Dr. Gerald M. Cross, a dedicated public servant who will be retiring from the Department of Veterans Affairs at the end of August.

Before joining the VA, Dr. Cross served in the U.S. Army for nearly 30 years. While in the Army, Dr. Cross was honored with several awards, including five Legion of Merit medals, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, USUHS, Commendable Services Medal and the Order of Military Medical Merit. His final Army assignment was as the U.S. Army Forces Command, FORSCOM, Surgeon at Fort McPherson, assembling medical support for overseas operations.

Inspired by his experience working with servicemembers and their families, Dr. Cross began an 11-year career at the VA after retiring from the Army. His work as Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health and Acting Under Secretary for Health earned him the Exceptional Service Award in 2010, awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Cross's work at the VA includes increasing the number of Vet Centers throughout the country, and adding over 1,000 physicians and over 3,000 nurses to the VA staff nationwide, and leading the VA Central Office Task Force that implemented the Suicide Prevention Hotline. His legacy at the VA will live on, helping veterans for years to come.

Dr. Cross is a truly inspirational public servant. I thank him for his many years of serving his country serving those who have served, and I wish him the best in his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Joseph A. Violante, national legislative director for the Disabled American Veterans, DAV, who will be retiring at the end of this week after over 20 years of service to DAV.

Joe's career of service started long before his tenure at DAV. As a U.S. Marine, he served in combat in Vietnam. Following his honorable discharge from the Marine Corps, Joe began practicing law in California, and in 1990, Joe joined the DAV Washington staff in its appellate work before the VA Board of Veterans Appeals, lending his legal expertise to serve his fellow veterans. Joe became DAV's national legislative director in 1996.

It is an incredible service to defend the United States in combat. Joe went above and beyond that. He came home and started fighting for others who served, helping countless veterans through his work at DAV. Over the past 2 decades, he has played a role in crafting major veterans legislation, and his work has affected policies at the VA, the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, and other Federal agencies. Joe has helped spur internal VA reforms, establish increases in VA's annual appropriations, expand primary care for veterans, expand the National Cemetery system and establish caregiver benefits for wounded veterans. These accomplishments, just few

of many, will continue to help veterans for years to come.

Joe served as national legislative director for three Presidential administrations and testified at my very first hearing as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. It was an honor to work with him, and I know I am not alone when I say I am sad to see him go. His retirement is well-deserved, and I wish Joe and his wife Debbie all the best.●

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD DEAN ROGERS

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, as a representative of Kansas in the U.S. Senate, it is my honor to celebrate the public service of Richard Dean Rogers, a Kansan who has dedicated his life to serving his community, State, and country. Richard's professional achievements are as plentiful and diverse as they are impressive. Born in Oberlin, KS in 1921, Richard Rogers went on to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and then moved to public life as a county attorney for Riley County, city commissioner and mayor of Manhattan, KS, State representative, State senator in the Kansas Legislature. In 1975, President Gerald Ford appointed Rogers to serve as a U.S. district judge for the District of Kansas, beginning a lasting tenure that will soon reach 40 years.

Judicial colleagues describe Judge Rogers as a role model whose long public life is marked by an amiable spirit, an unpretentious fortitude, and an unmitigated desire for the advancement and protection of all segments of society. Americans thank Judge Rogers for his service and contributions to the State of Kansas and the United States of America and wish Judge Rogers and his wife Cindy well as he moves to inactive senior status on August 7, 2015 and begins a new chapter of his most admirable life.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and withdrawals which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:43 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed