

people about their right to vote in Federal elections when they are leaving prison, sentenced to probation, or convicted of a misdemeanor.

The legislation is crafted to apply to Federal elections, and retains the States' authorities to generally establish voting qualifications. This legislation is consistent with congressional authority under the Constitution and voting rights statutes.

I am pleased that this legislation has been endorsed by a large coalition of public interest organizations, including: civil rights and reform organizations; religious and faith-based organizations; and law enforcement and criminal justice organizations. In particular I want to thank the Brennan Center for Justice, the ACLU, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and the NAACP for their work here.

I also urge Congress to take up legislation that I have introduced in the past with Senator SCHUMER, the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act. Voter suppression and intimidation are still very much alive in our Nation.

From misleading and fraudulent information about elections to voter intimidation and robocalls designed to suppress the vote, deceptive voting practices are often aimed at depriving minority communities of their voice in our democracy. The U.S. Constitution guarantees and protects the right of every American citizen to vote, and we have a duty to protect and ensure that right.

Unfortunately, we have seen a resurgence of deceptive voter practices in recent years. In 2006, during my own election to the Senate, thousands of minority voters in Maryland were targeted for misleading information designed to suppress their vote. Nationwide, there have been numerous reports of efforts to suppress the minority vote by putting out wrong information about election dates and location of polling places, along with suggestions that voters who had outstanding parking tickets would be arrested if they tried to vote.

This legislation is designed to protect voters across the Nation from election fraud and voter intimidation by creating criminal penalties for deceptive voting practices and by giving individual voters the right to take action. If deceptive practices are found to have occurred before election day, the U.S. Attorney General can take corrective action to halt distribution of such information and to set the record straight. After Federal elections, the Attorney General also would be required to report to Congress on the allegations of deceptive practices and the actions taken to correct such practices.

Let me also mention another issue relating to civil rights, which is the right to serve on a Federal jury. My view is that after release from prison, ex-offenders should be given both

rights and responsibilities. So in addition to restoring the right to vote as we seek to reduce recidivism and successfully integrate ex-offenders back into the community, I would also permit ex-offenders to perform the civic duty of serving on a jury of their peers.

This legislative change is a part of my BALTIMORE Act, S. 1610, the Building and Lifting Trust In Order to Multiply Opportunities and Racial Equality. I introduced this legislation after the death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore while in police custody. It also includes my End Racial Profiling Act, ERPA.

Next month the NAACP, which is headquartered in Baltimore, and other civil rights groups will conclude its Journey for Justice march at the U.S. Capitol as part of their Justice Summer campaign. This historic 860-mile march from Selma, AL to Washington, DC, will mobilize activists and advance a focused national policy agenda.

This policy agenda seeks to protect the right of every American to a fair criminal justice system and uncorrupted and unfettered access to the ballot box.

In particular, the march will call for the enactment of the Voting Rights Advancement Act and the End Racial Profiling Act. Congress should take up and pass these two critically important pieces of legislation.

It would be the appropriate way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.●

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss one of the great moral challenges of our time—human trafficking. The term human trafficking involves crimes of forced labor, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, forced marriage, and the sale and exploitation of children. Trafficking in persons destroys people and corrodes communities. It distorts labor markets and undermines stability and the rule of law. It is fueled by greed, violence, and corruption.

There are at least 21 million victims of human trafficking in the world—and over 5 million of them are children, according to the International Labor Organization, ILO. Forced labor alone generates more than \$150 billion in profits annually, making it one of the largest income sources for international criminals, second only to drug trafficking. Trafficking victims range from women enslaved as domestic workers in countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia and Singapore to Nepali construction workers building stadiums for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. It also ensnares Rohingya and Cambodian men and boys on Thai fishing boats working to put fish in European and American grocery stores. It includes countless Venezuelan women and girls, some lured from poor towns in the interior to urban centers, who are then subjected to sex trafficking.

Even in our own country, cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 States.

Traffickers take advantage of conflict, the collapse of state institutions, and even natural disasters—like the recent earthquake in Nepal—to prey on vulnerable civilians. We are witnessing terrorist groups like ISIL and Boko Haram that proudly build their “states” on the trade in and enslavement of women and children.

There has been some progress. This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The TVPA, and the annual Trafficking In Persons, TIP, Report it mandates, have played a major role in raising global awareness of human trafficking and galvanizing both civil society and governments to address both labor and sex trafficking crimes. The report analyzes the efforts of foreign governments, and our own, to comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons, as set out by the TVPA.

The TIP Report has been widely regarded as the “gold standard” for trafficking information, and as an essential tool for ensuring continued progress against the scourge of human trafficking. The value of the TIP Report, and the United States’ credibility on this critical issue, relies heavily on the integrity of that report.

On Monday, July 27, the Department of State released the 2015 TIP Report. I have great respect for the small, dedicated staff at the Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, as well as our numerous embassies around the world that help collect credible information for the report. Nevertheless, I was struck by the strong response to the 2015 report by outside country experts and frontline advocates who have worked in the trenches on human trafficking for years. They raised significant questions about the integrity and neutrality of the 2015 TIP Report and the decision to upgrade Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, and Malaysia, among others. We need to listen carefully to their views.

Of particular concern is the upgrade of Malaysia, which I want to discuss briefly. Malaysia has a serious human trafficking problem, which is why the State Department downgraded Malaysia last year to a Tier 3 country in the TIP Report, a level that includes the worst human trafficking offenders in the world. In Malaysia, the use of forced labor is pervasive in agriculture, construction, electronics, and textile industries, and the sex trade industry.

This year, the State Department upgraded Malaysia to the Tier 2 Watch List on the grounds that the government had made significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards to combat human trafficking. Those efforts by the government included beginning to reform its flawed victim protection regime, along with its legal framework, and consultations with

civil society. The Malaysian authorities increased the number of investigations and prosecutions—although the low number of convictions remained disproportionate to the scale of the problem. The 2015 TIP Report states that the Malaysian Government had three convictions of traffickers in 2014, a substantial decrease from the nine convictions reported in the 2014 TIP Report.

While Malaysia has taken small steps that seem to indicate some recent progress, these steps do not appear to me to be sufficient to justify an upgrade. Evidence of the trafficking problems in Malaysia continued outside of the 2015 TIP reporting period, which ended on March 31, 2015. For example, in May 2015, mass graves believed to contain bodies of 139 Rohingya trafficking victims were found in abandoned jungle camps along Malaysia's northern border, along with pens likely used as cages for the victims.

Malaysia is a party to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, negotiations. The juxtaposition of the administration's pursuit of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement in the case of Malaysia and the upgrade of Malaysia's TIP tier ranking at the same time has raised concerns among some observers regarding the integrity and veracity of the 2015 ranking process.

I look forward to hearing more from the administration in the days ahead about the considerations taken into account for the TIP ranking process and, in particular, the decision to upgrade Malaysia. That is why Chairman CORKER and I scheduled a hearing on this issue in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Archibald MacLeish, the writer and former Librarian of Congress, said:

There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American Dream.

We owe it to the millions of men, women, and children around the world who suffer from the horrifying depredations of modern slavery to maintain America's leadership, reputation, and resolve in the fight against human trafficking.●

RECOGNIZING YORK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

• Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on September 5, 1995, York County Technical College opened its doors in a hotel in Wells, ME, with five associate's degree and certificate programs and 156 students. Now known as York County Community College, the college in 2015 has three campuses, more than 30 programs, and some 1,700 full and part-time students. I congratulate this remarkable institution for 20 years of contributions to the people of Maine's southernmost county and to our entire State.

This truly is a community effort. In the years before the school was established, business, civic, and education

leaders in York County formed Partners for Progress, a coalition to address the challenge of developing a better-trained workforce for a fast-changing global economy. The demand for technical education was immediately apparent: by 1997, in just its third year, the numbers for enrollment and programs both tripled. In recent years, York County Community College has twice been named one of the fastest-growing community colleges in the Nation.

In 2003, Maine's outstanding technical college system expanded its mission to become a community college system that enhances skills, strengthens our State's economy, and increases access to college. Nearly one-half of York County Community College students are first-generation college students, and some 40 percent of graduates go on to enroll at a 4-year college. Under the leadership of President Barbara Finkelstein, a dedicated faculty and staff, and a committed YCCC Foundation, York County Community College reaches out in many ways. With programs for seniors and students of high school age and younger, lifelong learning is a core part of the school's mission. The Center for Entrepreneurship encourages the innovation that is essential to our economy. Arts and culture offerings and the "Eggs and Issues" speakers program enrich the entire community.

The people of Maine are proud of our community college system. The reason is clear: students of all ages and backgrounds are finding affordable tuition and the skills they need to succeed. They are finding real value.

York County Community College is an important part of that success. Since its inception, the college has educated more than 20,000 people in many fields, including medical fields, technology, business management, skilled trades, and many other occupations. It has fueled the economy, created opportunity, and helped improve the quality of life for all. The accomplishments of York County Community College during the past 20 years are inspiring, and I know the best is yet to come.●

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING MINNESOTA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize three outstanding Minnesota police officers. The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, the largest association representing Minnesota's rank-and-file police officers, recently met for its annual conference and named Sergeant Mark Ficcadenti of the St. Paul Police Department Police Officer of the Year and gave Honorable Mention Awards to Officer Mark Ross of the St. Paul Police Department and State Trooper Brian Beuning.

Sergeant Ficcadenti is a 30-year veteran of the St. Paul Police Department

where he serves an indispensable role performing community outreach and forging relationships with the most vulnerable immigrant populations. Sergeant Ficcadenti organizes events such as the East African Junior Police Academy, Ramadan celebrations with the local Somali community, and the "Safe and Sound" program that allows people to meet and get to know local police officers. His tireless efforts to ensure that the police department serves all communities has promoted safety, encouraged community cooperation, and fostered trust in law enforcement.

Honorable Mention Award recipient Officer Mark Ross of the St. Paul Police Department is a former school resource officer, whose awareness prompted him to look into a female high school student's frequent absences and suspicious relationship with her father. After some investigation, Ross revealed that the student's father had been abusing and neglecting the young girl for years. The father was convicted and is now serving a 25-year sentence in prison. As a result of Officer Ross' actions, the young woman has graduated from high school and has been accepted into a Minnesota college.

The second Honorable Mention Award recipient, Minnesota State Trooper Beuning, exhibited heroism and outstanding professionalism when dispatched last year to help a woman trapped in her car during a flash flood in Beaver Creek, MN. After wading through knee-deep waters, State Trooper Beuning calmed the trapped woman by standing next to the car and speaking to her through a cracked window. Seconds after Trooper Beuning and firefighters removed the woman through the window of her car, the vehicle was swept away by floodwaters. Three months after his act of bravery, Beuning was given the Officer of the Month Award by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

I join all of my fellow Minnesotans in applauding these three distinguished public servants. I would also like to thank not only these three individuals but all of Minnesota's brave law enforcement officers who keep our communities safe.●

RECOGNIZING INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTHCARE

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to one of the country's exemplary organizations, Intermountain Healthcare, which this year celebrates 40 years of service to people in Utah and the surrounding area. Based in Salt Lake City, Intermountain Healthcare has been a longtime provider of top-of-the-line care, as well as a leading example among the country's integrated health systems.

Prior to the organization's inception in 1975, the 15 hospitals that would become Intermountain Healthcare were administered and operated by the