

around the country are expected to serve this growing group of entrepreneurs. Women-owned small businesses generate needed income. According to a study released by the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, AEO, "microbusinesses can be vital for income and wealth creation in underserved communities. In 2010, for instance, female-headed family households in which at least one person owned a microbusiness generated \$8,000 to \$13,000 more in annual household income than similar households without a business owner." For low-income households, this additional income is a path toward prosperity. The report goes on to say, "the median net worth of business owners is almost two and a half times greater than that of non-business owners."

Liz Jamieson, Director of the Washington Center for Women in Business, a WBC in Lacey, WA, explains why we need to increase support for Women's Business Centers. "Since our inception in 2013, the Washington Center for Women in Business has coached and supported over 400 women entrepreneurs, to help them start, grow or scale up their companies. We've also provided training and business skills development to over 1000 entrepreneurs in the same time frame. Our center would not exist without the partnership of the SBA. Even so, our center serves 34 of the 39 counties in Washington State, and two staff people can only do so much, although they do an extraordinary job and we get rave reviews. This legislation will empower us to empower far more entrepreneurs from all over our state, and to help them grow their businesses and create more jobs."

The legislation enjoys broad support by a number of key national organizations that support women business owners. The Association of Women's Business Centers, AWBC, Women Impacting Public Policy, WIPP, and the Association for Enterprise Opportunity, AEO, believe the changes we are proposing in this legislation are necessary to make this program open to more women.

In closing, I would like to thank my colleagues who have cosponsored this legislation. I also want to commend Chairman VITTER and Ranking Member SHAHEEN of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee for their hard work and dedication to assisting women entrepreneurs succeed. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

SRI LANKA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to address the situation in Sri Lanka, a country that has endured a brutal civil war and is working to address the difficult issues of accountability and reconciliation.

Following the historic elections in January and August, Sri Lanka has a remarkable opportunity to economi-

cally integrate with the West and build security ties. This relationship has great potential that we all hope can be realized. But before we move forward on greater economic and security cooperation, Sri Lanka must finally resolve longstanding issues of accountability that have plagued the country since the end of the war and engage in a credible and legitimate effort to reconcile amongst all communities in the country: Sinhalese and Tamil, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist.

Efforts by the last government to deal with war crimes allegations were a sham, according to the U.N., according to the U.S. Government, according to the victims and according to the current government in Colombo. Justice has been mostly nonexistent for scores across the country. Many Tamils do not trust the central government to administer a genuine and credible domestic mechanism to provide real accountability for crimes committed during the war. Many Sinhala mothers want to know what happened to their sons who served in the military. Many combatants and civilians remain unaccounted for, necessitating a comprehensive effort to identify all missing persons.

On October 1, the U.N. Human Rights Council passed Resolution 25/1, which is focused on accountability and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. This resolution is not perfect, but if fully implemented, it provides the most promising path forward since the end of the war. The resolution leaves open the possibility for international judges and prosecutors in Sri Lanka's judicial mechanism to promote accountability. The current government has made clear that the international role will be limited to providing technical assistance and advice. As the U.S. works with Sri Lanka to implement the resolution, I urge our diplomats to push for the most robust international role in the accountability process. I also urge the Sri Lankan Government to continue to act in good faith to ensure that any accountability mechanism is seen as fair and just by all its citizens.

The U.S. led an effort to pass a 2014 U.N. Human Rights Council resolution which mandated a report on war crimes allegations in Sri Lanka. Earlier this month, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released its report which documented "a horrific level of violations and abuses" committed between 2002 and 2011. Among the violations committed by Sri Lankan government forces, the separatist Tamil Tigers, LTTE, and pro-government paramilitaries included in the 261-page report include enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, denial of humanitarian assistance, sexual violence, indiscriminate shelling, and the recruitment of child soldiers.

The report also recommended a series of measures that Sri Lanka should take to address these issues. For example the report recommends that the

Government of Sri Lanka integrate international judges and prosecutors with an independent Sri Lankan investigative and prosecuting body to try those accused of war crimes, implement security sector reform, return land occupied by the military, strengthen witness protection programs, and establish a national reparations policy in consultation with victims and families.

Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera spoke a few weeks ago at the 30th session of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. His own very welcome recognition of the depth of the institutional challenges and of past failures is more than enough reason to insist on outside involvement, particularly in investigations and witness protection.

Foreign Minister Samaraweera appears genuinely committed to reconciliation. He recently announced the government's support for a commission for truth, justice, reconciliation and nonrecurrence to help victims understand what happened and help them attain justice. He emphasized the government's commitment to an office on missing persons based on the principle of the families' right to know what happened to their loved ones. He announced the establishment of an office for reparations for victims. Most notably he acknowledged that any judicial mechanism for accountability will need to be designed through a wide process of consultations involving all stakeholders to include support from the international community.

Sri Lanka and its supporters in the international community expect action, not more promises, on each of these fronts.

The political will expressed by the government for a democratic future based on human rights and rule of law is something that should be acknowledged and welcomed by the U.S., international community, and all Sri Lankans. We have an obligation to support and foster this vision. As a friend, we also have an obligation to identify shortcomings as they arise throughout the process.

Moving forward, the U.S. can take several concrete measures to support Sri Lanka's accountability process through the challenging days ahead.

First, the U.S. should work to ensure that the commitments in the current UNHRC resolution are fully implemented. Following the passage of the resolution, the U.S. should push for the most robust international role in the accountability process, to include international judges and prosecutors.

Second, the United States can support efforts to ensure witness protection inside of Sri Lanka. This could include the establishment of special security force for witness protection, developed in close coordination with leaders in the Tamil community.

Third, the U.S. military should urge its counterparts in the Sri Lankan Armed Forces to play a constructive

role in the accountability process. I understand that there are many in the Sri Lankan military who seek to clear the military's name so that the institution can move forward. They should deliver on that commitment.

Fourth, the U.S. should continue and expand programs that strengthen civil society voices in Sri Lanka. The country now has a parliament which is more disposed towards incorporating civil society into the policymaking process. These advocates will be critical moving forward on this as well as broader reconciliation efforts.

Finally, the U.S. should make clear that any accountability process must include addressing violations committed by all sides in the conflict: LTTE, the Sri Lankan military, and pro-government paramilitary groups.

The goal of accountability is not revenge. The goal is to conduct a process where all sides are provided a measure of justice that leads to durable reconciliation and a marked departure from armed conflict. The previous government's policies were a dangerous cocktail that were slowly sliding Sri Lanka back into ethnic and religious strife. Today, Sri Lanka's leaders have an important opportunity to move beyond this divisive past. They say they want it and they have a plan on paper. Now is the time to act. And I am prepared to support the efforts of President Sirisena, Prime Minister Wickramasinghe, Opposition Leader Sampanthan, and all Sri Lankans towards that end.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said the credibility of the U.N. Human Rights Council is on the line in Sri Lanka. I agree and would say that the same goes for the United States. Our country has an important responsibility to finish the work of diplomats in recent years and promote the strongest accountability mechanism in Sri Lanka. Our credibility on human rights issues around the world is at stake and will be watched closely by human rights defenders and violators alike.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the men and women of Little Rock Air Force Base and the surrounding communities for their steadfast support, spirit of service, and faithful dedication to the defense of our Nation.

In 1951, community leaders in Jack-sonville, AR, and the surrounding region began petitioning Congress for the creation of a local air base. The needed support was unattainable in the post-World War II environment, so supporters took it upon themselves to raise the money and purchase the land

required for the base. In only 32 days, these air base advocates raised more than \$800,000, and with the combination of purchased and donated land, 6,359 acres were gifted to the U.S. Government for the establishment of Little Rock Air Force Base.

On October 9, 1955, the base officially opened. Since that day, it has served as a strategic operating location for numerous mission sets. From reconnaissance and bomber alert missions to the ever-present readiness of Titan II missile crews, Little Rock Air Force Base stood ready. With their cargo aircraft and selfless airmen, the base has responded to numerous natural disasters and humanitarian missions. Most recently, with the C-130 Hercules, Little Rock airmen have had a continuous global presence. From training members of three U.S. services and 20 foreign nations to supporting operations on five of the seven continents, they embody their motto as "The Home of Combat Airlift."

Over the past 60 years, the men and women of Little Rock Air Force Base have employed weapons systems covering every key tenant of air power. Currently, the base seamlessly blends Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve command personnel into a singular fighting machine, taking airmen from initial qualification through graduate-level training.

From its inception, Little Rock Air Force Base has been uniquely suited to fulfill any mission it is presented. The support of the community provides an unmatched strength that cannot be countered by any weapon system. The people of central Arkansas have opened their hearts and homes for six decades to welcome the men and women of the United States military.

I am proud to represent the men and women of Little Rock Air Force Base and the communities who support them. I am grateful for their service and dedication and look forward to a future of continued success and cooperation.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL MARTIN L. SIMS

• Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to pay special tribute to COL Martin L. Sims on the occasion of his retirement from a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Army.

Colonel Sims began his military career through the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps at Vanderbilt University where he was a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1987, was branched as an armor officer, and was granted an educational delay to attend law school at the University of Tennessee where he served as the managing editor of the Tennessee Law Review and graduated with honors in 1990.

After being assessed into the Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, he entered into active duty as a first lieutenant, less than 2 months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. For the next

25 years, Colonel Sims served faithfully as a judge advocate during which time he was stationed overseas four times and deployed on numerous occasions to Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Kuwait, and Iraq in support of various contingency operations.

A dedicated and talented soldier-lawyer, Colonel Sims held numerous positions of significant responsibility, culminating in his selection as the special assistant for strategy, plans, and capabilities within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. Some of the many other key positions Colonel Sims held prior to his final assignment include service as the staff judge advocate for the 25th Infantry Division in Iraq; the staff judge advocate for Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 in Afghanistan; legal advisor to the inspector general of the Army, and deputy chief of the international and operational law branch at the office of the Judge Advocate General of the Army. A recognized master military justice practitioner, COL Sims also served the Army and the Department of Defense as a distinguished jurist, sitting as a senior judge on the United States Army Court of Criminal Appeals and as an associate judge on the United States Court of Military Commission Review.

I ask that you join me, our colleagues, and Colonel Sims' many friends in saluting this distinguished officer's many contributions and sacrifices in the defense of our great Nation. It is fitting that the Senate today publicly recognizes his service and wishes him; his wife, Stacy; and their daughters, Heather and Rachel, health, happiness, and success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING EDGEWOOD CORPORATE PLAZA BUILDING

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I wish to recognize an historic milestone in the city of Grand Forks, ND, the 100th anniversary of the Edgewood Corporate Plaza Building.

The Edgewood Corporate Plaza Building, located on the corner of Fourth Street and DeMers Avenue in downtown Grand Forks, is a fixture in this city. Formerly known as the First National Bank Building, it is an impressive classical revival style structure of brick and stone on a sturdy polished granite base that covers two of its five stories.

When the building opened in 1915, it was home to the Scandinavian American Bank. It changed the face of downtown Grand Forks and helped spur westward growth toward the University of North Dakota. The bank, later known as First National Bank, and its building remained an anchor of the downtown area. It was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and is unofficially loved as the only building in the city with an escalator.