

Now, let me be clear. While I have always approached this relationship and the role of sanctions realistically, this election is a test the government must pass. Simply holding an election without mass casualties or violence, while vitally important, isn't good enough. Let me say that again. Just holding an election without mass violence is not enough. It has to do a lot more than just have the absence of violence.

As I stated on the Senate floor earlier this year, if we end up with an election not accepted by the Burmese people as reflecting their will, it will make further normalization of relations—at least as it concerns the legislative branch of this government—much more difficult. It would likely hinder further enhancement of U.S.-Burma economic ties and military-to-military relations. It would likely erode confidence in Burma's reform efforts. It would also likely make it more difficult for the executive branch to include Burma in the Generalized System of Preferences Program or to enhance political military relations.

Those of us who follow Burma want this country to succeed. We want to see the government carry out an election that is as free and as fair as possible. We are prepared to continue doing what we can to encourage more positive change in that country, and we will be realistic about what is possible.

As I just mentioned, that is the kind of approach I have always tried to take—a hopeful but still realistic one when it comes to this relationship, not just on the role of sanctions but also on the possible steps toward closer relations and on the individual programs and policies that would aid Burma's development and capabilities.

So we are hoping the Burmese Government gets this right. This is a big opportunity to send a signal to the rest of the world that Burma has indeed truly changed. We are hoping the Burmese people continue moving along the path of greater freedom and greater reform, but whatever the result, Burmese Government officials should be assured that Burma's partners in the United States and in the international community will be watching intently to see what happens in the coming weeks with a realistic assessment in what Burma can achieve.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LEESBURG "STOLEN GIRLS"

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is with a sense of solemnity that I recognize a low moment during the civil rights movement in my home State of Georgia 52 years ago.

During the height of the movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested for protesting racial segregation in Albany, GA, on December 16, 1961, and held in the Sumter County jail. The arrest galvanized the community and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, efforts to establish the Sumter County movement. Largely

comprised of preteen and teenage students, the movement repeatedly challenged segregation from 1963 to 1965. On July 15, 1963, a number of school-aged girls were arrested, transported to a jail in Dawson, GA, and held overnight. Early the next morning, they were transported to Leesburg, GA, without parental consent. The girls were held 20 miles from their homes in a Civil War-era stockade following their arrest for protesting, and they were not released until mid-September 1963.

After a SNCC photographer revealed the terrible, unsanitary, and dangerous conditions, the young girls, dubbed the "Stolen Girls," gained national attention. However, the incident has not received the attention it deserves.

The young ladies who were jailed are ready to tell the stories of their untold mistreatment after 52 years. I encourage my fellow Georgians and Americans to learn more about the civil rights movement so that all might find healing.

HEAD START AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to express my appreciation to the students, parents, staff, and alumni of the Head Start Program and to join them in celebrating Head Start Awareness Month. The dedicated individuals at Head Start have served our Nation's most vulnerable children and families for 50 years.

Since its founding in 1965, this program has provided comprehensive social and emotional development services to children from birth to age 5. Because of Head Start, many young parents have been able to get the support they need during the crucial first years of their child's life.

These services go far beyond what any parenting book could ever achieve. Head Start staff provides real-life guidance for young parents who, for example, may need the name of a local dentist or help finding adequate housing to keep their families healthy and safe.

In Oregon, we have 336 program locations that enrolled more than 13,000 individuals and families last year. You can find a Head Start location anywhere from Clatskanie, OR, all the way to Chiloquin. Earlier this month, Clatsop County celebrated Head Start's anniversary by holding simultaneous block parties at the county's three locations. These Head Start and Early Head Start centers are helping Oregon families who want to see their children reach their full potential.

The Head Start Program fosters literacy and prepares Oregon's children for success in school. Early learning through Head Start can put children on a path toward high school graduation and a better future. In my view, the Head Start Program is a critical investment in the development of our Nation's youngest children.

I speak today to honor those who are working to make a difference for our young people at all the Head Start lo-

cations in Oregon and across the country. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to continue to support early childhood education programs like Head Start.

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated this week as National Forest Products Week to recognize the important contribution of forest products to our economy and environment. This week means a great deal to industries and employees in the State of Idaho and citizens nationally.

In Idaho alone, forestry, logging, wood products, and pulp and paper production support more than 10,600 jobs, contribute over \$430 million to the local economy through wages, and produce a value of shipments of over \$2.6 billion. The industry continues to grow and is taking on new and innovative projects like the development of tall wood buildings. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the U.S.—with more architects opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, and high-performing tall buildings in urban dense settings.

Years of research and real-life experience have proven that wood buildings can withstand the effects of major wind and seismic events. These structures, when properly designed and constructed, protect lives and preserve building function. Wood buildings are durable and can be designed to last a lifetime. For example, a mass timber system was used in the 1974 rebuild of the nine-story Butler Square Building in Minneapolis. Heavy timber post and beam construction provided an adaptable solution and has allowed the building to stand strong since 1900.

As we celebrate forest products this week, let us all thank and congratulate those in the industry for their considerable contributions to economies the world over and their development of cutting-edge technologies that create better, stronger, and greener buildings.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, during National Forest Products Week, I am glad to join my colleagues in highlighting the important role that the forest products industry plays in Oregon and nationwide.

Many rural communities throughout Oregon were founded on the success of the forest products industry. With fresh innovations and a focus on sustainability, the industry continues to bolster these communities year after year. In Oregon, the industry supports more than 37,000 jobs, pumping over \$2 billion in wages directly into local economies. Overall, the industry produces a combined product value of over \$7.8 billion. By encouraging a sustainable forest products industry in Oregon

and across the country, we can help strengthen markets for wood products, both here and abroad, and continue to ensure the success of rural economies.

When harvested in a sustainable manner, wood can reduce carbon emissions, and new state-of-the-art technologies using wood as a building material have made timber more fire resistant and stronger than ever. Wood has the potential to contribute vastly to a low-carbon economy by locking up the carbon that trees draw out of the atmosphere when they grow. Wood products like cross laminated timber also bring down construction costs for multiple story buildings in large cities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has already recognized a project in my hometown of Portland that will demonstrate the unique benefits of timber as a building material for a new age. I'm proud that the Agriculture Department gave one of two Tall Wood Building Prize Competition awards to Portland, OR, and I'm looking forward to seeing the 12-story wood building as a new addition to the Portland skyline.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, as we come together to celebrate National Forest Products Week, I want to highlight the impacts and contributions of the forest products industry to my home State of Oregon. In my State, the forest products industry produces over 37,000 jobs; contributes over \$2 billion in wages to local economies; and produces a combined product value of nearly \$8 billion.

Oregon has forest land that covers over 29 million acres. We have 72 sawmills, millwork, and treating facilities, 49 engineered wood and panel products facilities, and 11 other types of wood products facilities, combining to make a total of 132 wood products facilities in the State of Oregon. Forest products produce \$262 million annually in tax payments to support the rural and local economies in the State of Oregon.

Forest products provide a clear value both for our economy and for the environment. Currently, America's forests store 2.5 trillion metric tons of carbon and capture nearly 13 percent of total U.S. CO₂ emissions annually. One-half of the dry weight of wood is carbon; and the lumber, wood products, and the wood used in buildings each provide a carbon storage system. With advanced technologies, we are seeing taller and stronger buildings made of wood—buildings that will last for generations and help move us towards a more sustainable future.

In closing, I would like to express my support for the forest products industry and their ongoing efforts to positively contribute to the environment and submit these comments as part of this year's National Forest Product's Week.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, in support of National Forest Products Week, I would like to recognize the nearly 18,000 hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in the great State of Maine.

Maine is home to about 40 wood products and paper manufacturing facilities, which contribute over \$900 million to the economy through jobs and wages and over \$4 billion in industry shipments of products, making the forest products industry one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the State.

Our Nation's forests are an essential element of our urban and rural landscape. Covering more than 750 million acres across America, they create opportunities for recreation and habitats for wildlife, and their products play an integral role in our daily lives.

As the only renewable building material, wood requires less energy to transport, construct, and produce in comparison to alternative building materials. By increasing the use of wood products in construction, we have the opportunity to reduce greenhouse emissions and improve the environmental performance of buildings. Design and building professionals are increasingly recognizing wood's environmental attributes and helping to create strong markets for wood products.

The industry continues to grow and is taking on new and innovative projects like the development of tall wood buildings. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the U.S., with more architects opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings.

Even with the advances of digital communications, paper also continues to play a valuable role in our daily lives: from enhancing education through written communications to capturing and preserving life's most memorable moments. In my State, I continually hear from men and women for whom paper is not only a preference, but for some, a necessity. Forty-one percent of Americans over 65 years of age do not use the internet. Eliminating paper as an option for vital government communications—like the IRS tax instruction manual—impedes access to critical information every citizen has a right to receive.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in Maine. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and reflect on the positive economic, social, and environmental impacts paper and forest products have on our everyday lives.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the important role of the forest products industry as we celebrate National Forest Products Week.

Montana's forests are a treasured part of our State's heritage which many of us hold so dear—not only are Montana's forests where we hunt, fish, explore, and live, but our forest prod-

ucts industry provides thousands of jobs for Montana families and a boost to our State's economy.

Sadly, many forest products jobs in Montana have been lost this year in large part due to an insufficient supply of logs from Federal lands. I'm fighting for commonsense reforms to restore active management across Montana so we can get more Montanans back to work, improve forest health, increase access to public lands, and provide much-needed sustainable revenues to our forested counties. These reforms must give the Forest Service the tools and resources it needs to increase responsible timber harvests and protect their work from obstructionist tactics that continue to encumber a substantial portion of the timber volume from Montana's national forests. Congress should enact these reforms swiftly.

Further, as we seek to improve the performance of our buildings, we should encourage the use of wood in the construction of Federal and other commercial buildings. Montana is home to approximately 5 engineered and panel products facilities and 12 sawmills, millwork, and treatment facilities that employ several thousand people across the State. These facilities are working to advance innovative new technologies, for example, cross laminated timber. I am proud to have SmartLam, Inc., the very first and only manufacturer of cross laminated timber, CLT, products in the U.S. located in the great State of Montana.

CLT products are creating opportunities in the U.S. to build taller wood buildings. Advancements in new technology utilizing engineered "mass timber" panels are creating new possibilities for wood. This concept is gaining momentum in the U.S. as many successful demonstration projects have been built and proven to be a safe and cost-effective solution in urban dense settings. With more than 17 tall wood buildings of seven stories or more having been built around the world serving as demonstration projects, building officials, designers, contractors, and consumers are increasingly confident in the safety of these buildings.

I want to thank the individuals in the forest products industry for their important contributions to my home State and for their efforts to expand tall wood building projects across the Nation.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to join my colleagues in support of the 55th National Forest Products Week and to recognize the more than 26,000 hard-working men and women that work in the forest products sector in Michigan.

Forests in Michigan and nationwide help keep our air and water clean, provide wildlife habitats, and places for recreation. These forests aren't just an environmental treasure; they are an economic powerhouse. Michigan is home to nearly 200 businesses that manufacture everything from office paper to wood pellets for home heating.

Nationwide, our forests provide more than 900,000 jobs, creating almost \$240 billion in economic output every year.

This economic activity leads to new opportunities in rural communities around the country. That's one reason why, as chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers to ensure the 2014 farm bill strengthened forestry programs and helped bolster rural economic development.

Forest product companies are also leaders in the effort to increase recycling. Today, 96 percent of all communities across the country have access to curbside or drop-off paper recycling programs. On top of that, the millions of Americans who recycle at home, work, and school have helped recover more than 60 percent of the paper consumed in the U.S. in each of the last 3 years. Picture this: each day our paper companies around the country recycle enough paper to fill a 15-mile-long boxcar train.

That type of leadership is great news for our planet and has some serious economic savings as well. Already more than 110 mills around the country are making paper using only recovered materials. And efforts are on track to recover more than 70 percent of all paper used by 2020. At the same time, paper can only be recycled a limited number of times, so it's important that steps are taken to ensure sustainable production of paper and forest products from our renewable forest resources.

Forest products can also help us become more energy independent. Manufacturers across the industry now use carbon neutral biomass that comes from forest waste—materials like bark, wood scraps, byproducts, and other unusable products—to help power their plants, reduce emissions, and save energy.

For all these reasons, I am proud to serve as co-chair of the Paper and Packaging Caucus with my colleague from Arkansas, Senator BOOZMAN.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the hard-working professionals of the forest products industry in the great State of Michigan. I would urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and applaud the thousands of hard-working Americans who are working hard every day to keep America as the leader in forest products.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize National Forest Products Week and the many women and men in Arkansas who rely on forestry and the forest products industry.

As co-chair of the Paper and Packaging Caucus, I am glad to work with my fellow co-chairs—Senator DEBBIE STABENOW and Representatives REID RIBBLE and GWEN GRAHAM—to highlight the role that this vital industry plays in our country.

About 25,000 Arkansans are directly employed in the forestry and forest

products sector. Arkansas is home to over 100 wood products, paper, and packaging manufacturing facilities that make nearly \$7 billion in products each year. Large and small employers dot the Arkansas landscape. I regularly hear from and meet with Arkansas families who earn a living and make great products at places like Green Bay Packaging, Domtar, Deltic Timber, and Georgia-Pacific. Every year, I meet with family tree farmers and small business operators who rely on our forestry sector to build a successful future. And I track and support efforts to responsibly manage and utilize our renewable Federal forest resources. According to the University of Arkansas, the forest and forest products industry produces \$2.3 billion in wages that are pumped into the Arkansas economy each year. This economic activity creates and supports countless other jobs.

I also serve as the co-chair of the Senate Recycling Caucus. In this dual capacity, I have seen the forest products industry's success in pairing economic growth with respect for the environment. The industry is making great strides in promoting sustainability and energy conservation, especially by using carbon neutral biomass, which meets about two-thirds of the industry's energy needs. Other successes include boosting exports and encouraging recycling. Paper recycling programs now reach 96 percent of the American people, and the industry is on target to recover and recycle about 70 percent of its products in the next few years.

At the same time, the industry is facing challenges—from problems with our transportation policies and infrastructure to a regulatory maze that is too difficult and costly to navigate. Here in Congress, we need to solve these challenges together, through common sense, cooperation, negotiation, an open process, and a clear-eyed analysis of the facts.

We also need to support the industry as it transitions. While more information is available digitally, paper and packaging products are still indispensable to our modern economy. For example, many Americans, particularly those in rural settings or with limited resources or computer skills, have difficulty accessing information digitally. That's why in general, and particularly at government agencies, the format of information should be a consumer choice.

In conclusion, paper, packaging, and other wood products are at the heart of modern life and a modern economy. I am glad to join my colleagues in celebrating National Forest Products Week. These recyclable and renewable resources make our lives better, and forestry is truly an Arkansas success story—and an American success story. Thank you.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to join Senator CRAPO and my colleagues in recognizing National Forest Products Week and in recog-

nizing the men and women of the forest products industry for their contributions to our Nation and, in particular, my home State of Washington.

The forest products industry employs nearly 30,000 people in Washington, contributing \$1.9 billion dollars in jobs and wages. Employees work both in wood products facilities and in paper manufacturing; and these facilities, and the jobs and wages they create, have been a dynamic part of our economy.

I would like to commend the industry for its recent technological advances and for continually looking toward the future. Forest products have contributed greatly to improvements in energy efficiency in buildings and their overall environmental performance. I am particularly excited about new “mass timber” technologies, such as cross laminated timber, CLT, that are now opening an entirely new suite of opportunities. New technologies create new markets for wood and healthy working forests.

Throughout our State, there is great interest in CLT. We are already seeing this new product bringing innovation to the design and construction of buildings. Tall wood buildings are now being built around the world. The U.S. market is ripe for applying this new technology to new construction. I appreciate the support that the administration is providing for builders that want to use CLT. I expect to see an increase in the use of CLT and an increase in the number of facilities that create it.

Our forests and forest products play an important role in sequestering and storing carbon. The use of wood in buildings provides a great opportunity to make our buildings more environmentally and energy efficient. This is a great example of the use of forest products creating a healthier economy and environment.

Even though I have talked so much about CLT, I would like to commend the men and women who comprise this industry for their many contributions in Washington and around the U.S.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity to recognize the men and women of the forest products industry as we celebrate National Forest Products Week. These folks represent a critical part of my State's outdoor heritage and economy.

The forestry and forest products industries support nearly 5,000 jobs in Montana and generate approximately \$22 million in State and local taxes. Today, Montana is home to 20 facilities that rely on forest products, from sawmills to engineered wood and panel production sites. In a time of increased global competition, when the U.S. Forest Service has to spend over half its budget on wildfire costs instead of managing our forests, the men and women who work in this industry deserve our support. These are the folks who cut trees, transport them from the forest to mills, process lumber, and make a wide variety of products that

we use every day. I remain committed to pursuing sound forestry and trade policies that will ensure this important industry can compete fairly, contribute to sustainable forest management, and continue to provide good jobs in Montana.

The forest products industry is also looking forward to find new ways to put our wood fiber to good use and create additional value for local economies in Montana. In Whitefish, SmartLam, Inc. is the first manufacturer of cross laminated timber, CLT, products in the Nation. This Montana company is on the cutting edge of engineered-wood technology for building construction materials. SmartLam is producing more than a million board feet of CLT products a month and hopes to open a new facility due to increasing demand. These products can aid in the construction of taller, more fire-safe wood buildings and help reduce the carbon footprint of the construction process. Innovative wood construction systems are flexible and can be easily combined with other building materials, offering alternatives for construction in urban areas while supporting sustainable development in rural communities.

In addition to providing good jobs, the forest products industry plays a key role in the sustainable management of the more than 25 million acres of forests in Montana. Most of the forested lands in Montana are managed by the U.S. Forest Service. We have seen industry come together with a wide array of stakeholders in Montana to develop collaborative recommendations for projects aimed at supporting local economies, improving forest health, reducing wildfire risks, and restoring watersheds. On private lands, industry has partnered with conservation organizations to keep forested lands forested as development pressures have grown.

In addition to National Forest Products Week, this week also marks the fifth annual Montana Forest Products Week. There is no better time to say thanks to the folks who work in Montana's forest products industry.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today about the many contributions of the forest products industry, as we recognize their important work during National Forest Products Week.

Wood products play a significant role in our economy. The U.S. wood products industry employs more than 548,000 people in manufacturing and forestry, and U.S. private forest owners support 2.4 million jobs and \$87 billion in payroll. In Maine, there are a number of wood products manufacturing facilities, including sawmills, millwork, and treatment plants, engineered wood and panel product facilities, and paper mills.

The environmental benefits associated with wood products—from renewability to responsible forest practices to a light carbon footprint—are helping

to strengthen markets for wood products, in turn stabilizing the wood industry's ability to create jobs and support local economies. Moreover, sustainable forest management practices in the United States maintain important forest values such as biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Strong markets for wood products provide a financial incentive for landowners to invest in their forests and keep them healthy for future generations.

Design and building professionals are increasingly recognizing wood's environmental attributes and helping to create strong markets for wood products. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the United States where more architects are opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings, particularly in urban dense settings. As the only renewable building material, wood requires less energy to transport, construct, and produce than other building materials.

In closing, I encourage my colleagues to support policies that maintain and grow strong markets for wood products. As we celebrate National Forest Products Week, I thank the employers and employees of the forest products industry for their contributions to Maine and the Nation.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, in support of National Forest Products Week, I would like to recognize the more than 25,000 hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in the great State of South Carolina. With an annual payroll of almost \$1.7 billion and an estimated value of products manufactured in the State exceeding \$9 billion, the forest products industry is among the largest manufacturing sectors in my State and the largest valued agricultural crop.

This is the 55th consecutive year that we are recognizing the forest products industry for its contributions to our economy and to sustainable manufacturing. The world has changed a lot since the first National Forest Products Week in 1960 and so has the industry.

Over the last few years, with new advancements in lumber and mass timber technologies, the U.S. has begun innovative projects to build tall wood buildings. Over 17 tall wood buildings with over seven stories or more have been built around the world, which served as demonstration projects. Due to the success of these tall wood buildings, contractors and consumers are more confident than ever in the safety and high performance of these buildings. Additionally, with the right safety measures, tall wood buildings can be designed to meet and exceed fire safety requirements.

Wood buildings are durable and can be designed to last a lifetime. Years of

real-life experiences and research have shown that wood buildings can also withstand effects of major wind and seismic events. When designed and constructed properly, these structures are high performing and provide the necessary strength and ductility to preserve building function and provide life safety protection.

Similarly, paper and packaging products have grown with the demands of a 21st century global economy. Made from a recyclable and renewable resource, paper and paper-based packaging transport food, medicine, and manufactured goods faster, further, safer, and more environmentally friendly than ever before.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and reflect on the sustainable uses of America's forests and the important contributions they make to our economy and our national life.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I wish to honor National Forest Products Week. I would simply like to express my support for newly available and continuously evolving opportunities to build with wood.

In the State of Idaho, the forest products industry makes significant contributions to our local, State, and national economies. In Idaho alone, we have 19 sawmills, millwork, and treating facilities and 4 facilities making engineered wood and panel products. These products are increasingly used in buildings all around the globe.

As we all know, U.S. and global populations are rapidly growing. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies.

Today, the concept is gaining traction in the United States. More architects are opting for a sustainable solution to attain safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings in urban dense settings—many of these projects already do or will use engineered wood products.

With more than 17 tall wood buildings of seven stories or more having been built around the world serving as demonstration projects, building officials, designers, contractors, and consumers are more confident than ever in the safety of these buildings.

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize the many forest products facilities and employers in my home State that are helping make these tall wood building projects become a reality.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO OTTO MERIDA

- Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Otto Merida on his retirement after nearly 40 years of service to the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce. It gives me great