

amazing thing in this divided, polarized political environment we are in, with, I believe, a 39-to-1 vote in the conference committee for a bill that combines both the House and the Senate product. This is really landmark education legislation that will help parents and local communities take control of their children's education instead of ceding to the Federal Government. Certainly, this bill is another win for the American people.

Where I come from, people like the fact that we essentially have repealed the common core mandate, that we have eliminated the Federal Government as a national school board, and that we have sent the power back where it belongs, which is to parents and teachers and local school districts, and ceded more of that authority from here in Washington, DC, back to them.

I could continue with this list of legislative accomplishments by noting that the Chamber has also passed legislation that replaced the flawed Medicare payment system for physicians. This is the notorious doc fix. This is another example where for years and years we passed temporary patches and never solved the underlying problem. But Congress did, and I think that is another thing we can be proud of, along with the first budget passed since 2009, and there is more I could add to the list. But my point is there is a difference in the new 114th Congress, and elections do make a difference. We have worked together on a bipartisan basis where we can to make progress to solve problems for the American people during this first year of the 114th Congress. A lot of this is due to the steady leadership of the majority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, and all the hard work our colleagues have put in to make this such a productive year.

So we are on track to continue with this momentum into the new year, and with just another week or so of work to do before we break for the holidays, I think we can take some pride in these accomplishments but yet know that there is a lot more we have to do, not only for the remainder of this year but into next year as well.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF TRAVIS R. McDONOUGH

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I rise today to support the confirmation of a fellow Chattanooga, Travis R. McDonough, who has been nominated to serve as U.S. district court judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. I have known Travis personally for

many years, and I have full confidence that he will serve the people of Tennessee honorably if confirmed to the Federal bench.

Travis is well known in Chattanooga as a civic leader and has earned broad respect in our community. He most recently served as chief of staff and counselor to the mayor, having previously served as a partner at the law firm of Miller & Martin, where he specialized in criminal and white-collar litigation. A Truman scholar, he received his undergraduate degree from Sewanee and his law degree from Vanderbilt University.

We had a number of conversations, as you can imagine, during his confirmation process, and he has assured me he will be a fair and independent judge. I wholeheartedly support his nomination and encourage my colleagues to support his confirmation.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH E. MANNELLA

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to join my friend and Finance Committee colleague, Ranking Member WYDEN, in offering appreciation to a dedicated public servant, Mr. Kenneth E. Mannella, who has worked steadily for the American people at the Social Security Administration and will soon pursue activities in retirement.

Ken Mannella joined the Social Security Administration in 1996 as a legislative analyst with the Office of Legislation for Congressional Affairs. Currently, he serves as an associate commissioner for the Office of Congressional Affairs.

Before joining the Social Security Administration, Ken worked for 8 years for Governor William Donald Schaefer of Maryland. In Governor Schaefer's final terms, Ken Mannella was director of the Maryland National Relations Office, where he worked with Congress to obtain Federal assistance to help Maryland pursue its priorities. Prior to his work in Maryland, Ken worked for the U.S. Senate for 10 years on the staff of Senator Richard Schweiker and for Senator Charles Mathias as counsel on the Patents, Copyrights, and Trademarks Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

You don't have a career working with the Senate and in congressional relations for as long as Ken has been at it unless you are really good at what you do. And that has been our experience with Ken; he has excelled at developing

relations that facilitate useful flows of information and ideas between whom he represents and Congress. It would be hard to find anyone who would not agree that Ken is always an honest broker and always there to help if you need it.

I appreciate Ken's work with Congress, and I know that my good friend Senator WYDEN does as well. We wish him all the very best as he moves on to pursue what lies ahead for him and genuinely appreciate the work he has done with Congress, for the Social Security Administration, and—of most importance—for beneficiaries of the Social Security programs.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAVE CITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today, in the United States Senate, I wish to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the founding of Cave City, KY. Next year in 2016, 150 years will have passed since Cave City was first incorporated in 1866.

Located in the south central region of the Commonwealth, Cave City is proud to be known worldwide as the home of Mammoth Cave, the world's longest known cave system with more than 400 miles explored underground. It is one of the oldest tourist attractions in the United States.

Cave City may only have about 2,500 residents, but more than 2 million visitors flock to Mammoth Cave National Park every year. Cave City is proud to host so many visitors from across the globe and present to them their special brand of Kentucky hospitality and charm.

Cave City is not only the gateway to Mammoth Cave, but also home to fine shops and restaurants, privately owned caves open for tours, and many other tourist attractions and places of interest. It is the zip line capital of Kentucky, with three zip line tours close to town. And the Cave City Convention Center is one of the premier meeting and convention venues in the region.

The year 2016 will be a busy year for Cave City. Not only is it the 150th anniversary of the town's founding, it is also the 200th anniversary of the earliest known organized tours being given at Mammoth Cave, the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, and the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Mammoth Cave National Park.

Therefore, I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing that 2016 is the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Cave City and in extending a heartfelt congratulations to the people of Cave City as they celebrate this important milestone. I am proud to be their voice here in the Senate as Cave City represents the very best of what Kentucky has to offer our Nation and the world.

TRIBUTE TO TED BEATTIE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to take a few moments to acknowledge Ted A. Beattie, president and chief executive officer of the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, IL. Earlier this year, Ted announced that he would be retiring from the world's largest indoor aquarium in late 2016.

The Shedd Aquarium is home to 32,500 fish habitats and attracts more than 2 million people every year. It is an educational and cultural treasure in Chicago—and the most popular family and tourist attraction in the city.

Under Ted Beattie's leadership, the Shedd Aquarium was Chicago's top attended paid cultural attraction for 17 of the last 21 years, welcoming more than 33 million guests. It is an extraordinary accomplishment. After a 35-year affiliation with Shedd, Ted is leaving this beloved institution in good shape. Since joining Shedd in 1994 as the third president and CEO in the aquarium's history, here are just some of his many accomplishments: Ted developed and opened six permanent exhibits, only the second expansion since the aquarium opened its doors in 1930. He created eight special exhibits, the latest being "Amphibians," opening next May, and established the Daniel P. Haerther Center for Conservation and Research, which has grown to include 18 global field research programs. Ted also oversaw the addition of Shedd's onsite animal hospital and lab facilities housed in the A. Watson Armour III Center for Aquatic Animal Health and Welfare.

Throughout his time at Shedd, Ted Beattie demonstrated an exceptional ability to engage and inspire the next generation. As president, Ted opened a teen learning lab, a free, collaborative space for teens—developed by teens—to enhance critical thinking skills while exploring environmental interests and science.

Prior to joining Shedd, Ted Beattie served as director for both the Knoxville Zoo and Fort Worth Zoo and held positions at the Chicago Zoological Society's Brookfield Zoo and Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. During his tenure as president of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, AZA, he spent 15 years teaching management courses as part of AZA's professional management schools and received AZA's highest award for professional excellence—the R. Marlin Perkins Award for Professional Excellence.

Time and time again, Ted found creative ways to get around obstacles and make good things happen for Shedd and other zoos and aquariums across the country. I know this is not the final chapter for Ted Beattie. He will continue to be a passionate advocate for conversation and educational initiatives through the Penny Beattie Leadership Fund, a professional development scholarship program established in honor of Ted's late wife.

I congratulate Ted Beattie on his distinguished career and thank him for

dedicating a large part of his career to the Shedd Aquarium and the people of Chicago. It has been a pleasure to support his work, and I wish him all the best in the next chapter of his life.

RECOGNIZING CENTERTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to applaud Centerton Elementary School of Martinsville, IN, for being recognized as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized over 7,500 public and nonpublic schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Centerton Elementary School continues to be one of the best performing Indiana schools. It was first named a National Blue Ribbon School in 2008 and has been named an Indiana Four Star School for 18 out of the last 20 years.

In 2014, Centerton Elementary School's ISTEP+ pass rate for English/Language Arts scores increased by approximately 5 percent to 97 percent. Mathematics scores increased to 97 percent and above for third through fifth grades.

Centerton Elementary School's effectiveness can be found in its holistic approach and dedication to student achievement. At Centerton, staff members collaborate to pinpoint and address individual students' needs. In addition, Centerton staff and students' families work together to teach and instill values that develop strong character including responsibility, goal setting, commitment, and communication. With some of the highest English and mathematics scores in Indiana, Centerton Elementary School is a stellar example of the benefits that result from dedication, motivation, collaboration, and family partnership in education.

I would like to recognize Centerton Elementary School principal, Debbie Lipps, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and our communities well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Centerton Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING FARMERSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to applaud Farmersville Elementary School of Mount Vernon,

IN, for being recognized as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized over 7,500 public and nonpublic schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Farmersville Elementary School continues to be one of the best performing schools in the State of Indiana. It has been named an Indiana Four Star School multiple times.

In 2014, Farmersville Elementary School's ISTEP+ pass rate for English/Language Arts scores increased by more than 5 percent to 99 percent. Mathematics scores increased to approximately 97 percent and above for third through fifth grades.

Farmersville Elementary School's effectiveness can be found in its holistic approach and dedication to student achievement. Farmersville staff and students' families work together to teach and instill values that develop strong character including responsibility, goal setting, commitment, and communication. With some of the highest English and mathematics scores in Indiana, Farmersville Elementary School is a stellar example of the benefits that result from dedication, motivation, collaboration, and family partnership in education.

I would like to acknowledge Farmersville Elementary School principal Dr. Elizabeth Johns, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and our communities well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Farmersville Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today, I wish to applaud Memorial Elementary School of Valparaiso, Indiana for being recognized as a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized over 7,500 public and nonpublic schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

Memorial Elementary School continues to be one of the best performing