

you. Where are we on some of these education things? He was talking to me about No Child Left Behind. So Sidney was like: I am not going to miss her coming to Galena and perhaps not getting a chance to talk to her. He wasn't leaving. He was parked there to visit.

If Sidney Huntington chose to call you a friend, you didn't take it for granted, and you accepted that gift with great humility. I think about the relationships, the friendships I have made over the years. I can say nothing can make me, a third-generation Alaskan, feel more like an Alaskan than knowing I had earned the respect of Sidney Huntington.

Eric Mack, a journalist who worked in Galena, tells the story of how Sidney managed to survive when his snow machine fell through the ice. He was coming back from a trip. He had been out tending his trap line, and it was cold. It was about 30 degrees below zero. It was night. It was dark. He was on his snow machine. His snow machine went through a hole in the ice into a shallow section of the Yukon, and he was a long way from home. He dragged that snow machine out of the water, out of the icy water by himself. He made a fire from the gasoline and some frozen wood he had, and he kept himself from freezing to death. Think about how you do all of that. That is one tough Alaskan there.

Sidney Huntington was born in Huslia, which is on the Koyukuk River. He was born in 1915 to a Scots-Irish father who arrived from New York in 1897 to participate in the Gold Rush. His mother was Athabascan Indian. Sidney's mother died when Sidney was about 5 years old, and for about 2 weeks it left Sidney and two younger siblings to survive in the wilderness. Think about that.

This is all laid out in an exceptional book that Sidney wrote called "Shadows on the Koyukuk." The details in the opening chapters are about the situation when he, as the oldest of three children, at 5 years old, was in a cabin in the middle of the wilderness with his mother and his mother died. At 5, he was the only one to care for his two siblings. This was the beginning of, again, a remarkable life for a remarkable man.

His father lived off the land as a trapper and a trader, and so the stories that are shared through Sidney's book, again, are just remarkable about what was happening in Alaska in the early 1900s. Sidney and his siblings first were sent to the Anvik Mission for schooling, and then he later attended the BIA school at Eklutna. He basically got the equivalent of a third-grade education. That was it. That was it for his formal schooling—third grade.

You need to keep that in mind as I talk about the rest of Sidney's story and his life. When he was 12 years old he returned to help his father work the trap line and learn the subsistence lifestyle, so he was out in the middle of Alaska. He was out in the wilderness.

He was not in school. By the age of 16 he was earning a living hunting and trapping and at age 22 he went to work in a gold mine. In 1963 Sidney moved to Galena to work for the Air Force as a carpenter, and then in the 1970s he went into the fish-processing business. So he had been everything. He had been a gold miner, he had been a carpenter, he had been in fish processing, he had been a hunter and a trapper and a subsistence guy. He was truly living a traditional life in rural Alaska, sustaining himself and his family through a mixture of subsistence and participation in the cash economy. Many around the State share this life story, but that was just one dimension of Sidney.

This man, who had the equivalent of a third-grade education, served two decades on the Alaska boards of fish and game. In 1993 he published the best-selling biography I just mentioned entitled "Shadows on the Koyukuk." In fact, this book he wrote is so good, is so compelling, it is the book I take around to the high schools when I go to visit students. I never leave a school visit without leaving something there, and I leave a book for their library. The book I have chosen to leave with students all over the State is "Shadows on the Koyukuk" because of the amazing accomplishments of this amazing Alaskan.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1989 awarded Sidney an honorary doctorate in public service. Here again is an extraordinarily accomplished man, a man with a third-grade education, focused on public service, education, helping his community, his State, and publishing a best-selling biography.

Through the University of Alaska system, Sidney participated in oral history interviews that will be examined by historians and students for decades to come.

He was truly the stuff of which legends are made. Alaska holds a lot of legends. It is a big State with tall stories. But Sidney, once again, was the real deal. His life was a profile of courage and inspiration. It has not only been chronicled in books and interviews—it was even played out in theater in a stage play called "The Winter Bear."

"The Winter Bear" tells the fictional story of a young Native man who contemplated suicide. In this play, this young Native man is sentenced to cut wood for Sidney Huntington. Making a pact with Sidney to live, he goes on to construct a traditional bear spear under Sidney's guidance. That spear is used to bring down this marauding bear. But Sidney is injured in the incident, and the young man, who is very insular and very afraid of public speaking, must now speak for Sidney before thousands of people at the Alaska Federation of Natives convention. At this point, the young man finds himself and his voice, recognizes the value of his life, and emerges as a leader.

While this play, "The Winter Bear," may be fictional, Sidney Huntington's

experience with suicide is absolutely not. In real life, Sidney lost children to suicide. He grieved for them every day and shared his loss with schoolchildren who visited his cabin. As we visited in quiet conversations, he shared with me the loss and grief that he felt, as not only his children but others in his community and his region have suffered because of suicide.

Sidney was a champion for young people. He believed in the future of our young people, urging that they choose life, that they get a good education, and that they take pride in their proud heritage.

Sidney Huntington was the patriarch of a large and extended family. I know so very many of them, and they are all very accomplished in their own right. He is survived by his wife, Angela. They were married 72 years; that is a pretty good marriage there. He has some 30 children, both biological and adopted, and many, many grandchildren. On May 10 of this year, they gathered in Galena to celebrate the centennial of Sidney's birth, and they all wore T-shirts that bore some of Sidney's words of wisdom: Make life worth living; work hard; keep up a good spirit; have a good attitude toward others—this will take you a long way in life. These are words to live by and words to remember an Alaskan who was truly larger than life and as large as the great State that he called home.

I was privileged by the gift of the friendship of Sidney Huntington. Alaska is privileged by the gift of his legacy. This man is a true hero of our homeland. He is now gone, but his life of inspiration will long, long be remembered. I am grateful for the opportunity to again pay tribute to a great Alaskan and to extend my condolences and that of the U.S. Senate to his family, his many extended relatives, and those of us throughout the State who cherish a great Alaskan leader.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier today the U.S. Senate added to its list of accomplishments this year by passing important education reform. The Democratic leader, our friend from Nevada, has called this Senate "unproductive," but the Washington Post took a look at what he had to say and gave him three Pinocchios for that one.

When we look at the accomplishments of this year, they are bipartisan, to be sure—as they must be. That is the nature of this institution. Even the minority can, and frequently does, stop us from doing things the majority would like to do. But what has been remarkable is where we have been able to find consensus and work together. Certainly, the education bill—the Every Student Succeeds Act—is an example of that, as is the leadership not only of Majority Leader McCONNELL, who

scheduled the vote on this legislation, but also Chairman ALEXANDER of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and Ranking Member MURRAY.

Senator MURRAY has also been very important in working with us on important anti-human trafficking legislation that passed the Senate 99 to 0. She worked with us on the President's request for us to pass trade promotion authority that only 13 Democrats voted for. This is an important piece of economic legislation.

Then, in recent days, we passed the first multiyear highway bill. That was due to the partnership of Senator INHOFE, chairman of an important committee, Chairman HATCH, chairman of the Finance Committee, and Senator BOXER on the Democratic side basically trying to take on her own leadership that didn't want us to pass a multiyear highway bill, at least at first, because they wanted to use the pay-fors in that bill to spend on other things.

My point is that leadership is important not only at the Presidential level; it is important here at the level of Congress in terms of setting the agenda. But the hard work of legislation is actually trying to find areas of common ground and consensus so we can actually get things done.

There are some times that stopping what the majority wants to get done is the right thing to do—when the legislation is misguided, when it is the wrong kind of policy. But we found places where we can work together in order to deliver results for the American people, and the Every Student Succeeds Act is an example of that. It replaced a law which was sorely in need of reform, and it stopped Washington from imposing common core mandates on our classrooms. It will ensure that power is devolved from Washington back to the local communities, to parents and teachers, where that power should exist.

In the words of Chairman ALEXANDER, it has eliminated the Department of Education as a national school board. Our country is simply too big and too diverse, and the needs of our students in local communities are so different that the power to innovate, the power to set the standard, and then to find the most creative and innovative way to achieve those standards I believe is best determined at the local level and not here in Washington, DC. This legislation does just that.

I use as an example Laredo, TX, where I went to a ninth grade science class. Due to the proximity of the Eagle Ford Shale in South Texas, they were teaching ninth graders the fundamentals of petroleum geology as a way to teach their science courses. So the students could see the future of a job in the oil and gas sector because of the proximity of the Eagle Ford Shale and the prosperity that has brought and a direct connection between the otherwise abstract lessons of science

that they might be learning in class. Washington, DC, is not going to be able to come up with that kind of creative solution or way of making science relevant to students in Laredo, TX. So I use that as an example of why this legislation is so important to leave to the States and local school districts, parents, and teachers the ability to determine the curriculum and accountability measures they want to adopt.

I am proud we have come together in true bipartisan fashion to strengthen the hands of parents, teachers, and local communities and to provide real education reform for our children.

PRESIDENTIAL STRATEGY TO DEFEAT ISIS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to talk about the speech the President gave on the Islamic State, or ISIS. He spoke about this to the Nation last Sunday night. I read all the newsclips after having listened to what the President had to say, and I think the universal reaction was that the President did not come up with anything new. Basically, the message was that we are going to stay the course.

Of course, this is the same President who called ISIS “contained.” I don't know of any other person—any other person with any knowledge of the subject matter—who would share the view the President expressed, that ISIS was somehow contained. Indeed, we have learned that the threat of ISIS is threefold: We have the battle raging in the country, what started out as a civil war in Syria. Now the borders between Iraq and Syria have essentially been erased, and ISIS is controlling large portions of those two countries. It is also about the foreign fighters who come from Europe and other places within the region and even from the United States. There have been examples of people who come from the United States over to the fight in Syria and Iraq in order to help ISIS. Then, as we sadly learned again, just as we learned in Paris recently, we have seen in San Bernardino, CA, the radicalization of people already in our country, using things such as social media and the Internet.

It is troubling that the President did not choose to tell us what new strategy he was going to use in order to actually make sure we were able to accomplish his own stated objective of degrading and destroying ISIS. Instead, we heard that he had no interest in changing course. As I said a moment ago, this has dangerous and dramatic consequences right here at home too. In light of the terrorist attacks in San Bernardino—one that killed 14 people and wounded more than 20—you would think that the President would reconsider whether the course we are on needs a midcourse correction.

We saw that, for example, in Iraq. President Bush saw the war in Iraq going poorly, despite our best efforts—and then took a huge chance, upon ad-

vice of General Petraeus and other military leaders, to conduct a surge. It was a big risk, but it paid off.

President Obama, on the other hand, does not seem to want to learn from his experience or his mistakes. This “wait and see” approach has served only to strengthen the stranglehold ISIS has on the Middle East, and it has enabled the recruitment of thousands of jihadists from all over the world.

What we really need from the President is to listen to his military and national security leadership and to formulate a comprehensive strategy against ISIS and bring additional military means against them. The President likes to say this is a choice between what we are doing now and American boots on the ground. That is a false choice. That is not the choice. Those aren't all the options available to the President. But we need to bring means against ISIS that would inflict sizable losses, shatter their false narrative about their actually prevailing and making advances in their effort to reestablish or establish a Caliphate in the Middle East, and stop them from spreading their hateful ideology and their violence—not only in Syria, Iraq, and in that region, but around the world.

In short, what we need is a dramatically different approach. This concern for our current trajectory in the fight against ISIS is not shared only by folks on this side of the aisle. A number of our colleagues across the aisle agree that the President's strategy isn't working, but some of their solutions are pretty puzzling. Just this week, the Democratic leader and some of the other senior leaders across the aisle said that the solution is for the President to appoint another czar—a czar that can eliminate ISIS.

We don't need another appointed bureaucrat. We need a Commander in Chief who is willing to recognize the reality on the ground, one who will step up and lead, and one who will lay out for Congress and the American people a strategy that has a reasonable chance of success.

Because of the President's refusal to change course and develop a serious and aggressive strategy to eradicate ISIS, several of my colleagues and I have sent a letter to the President with some hopefully constructive suggestions. We have urged him to take commonsense measures that are designed to accomplish his own stated goal of degrading and ultimately destroying ISIS.

It is evident that any way forward must inflict significant territorial losses to ISIS. Right now we are engaged in bombing missions, which are necessary but not sufficient to actually hold any territory. That takes people on the ground. It takes military advisers. It takes the United States' leadership—not our U.S. military on the ground—but it takes somebody there to reclaim territory that Americans fought to secure just a few short years