

RECOGNIZING THE SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America on reaching a significant milestone of 50 years of service in our State. It gives me great pleasure to recognize this entity that does so much for Nevada's veterans, active military members, and their families.

For half a century, the southern Nevada chapter has provided southern Nevada's military community with an incredible support system to address a diverse range of veterans and active military members' issues. The organization offers our Nation's brave men and women advice and guidance on compensation and benefits, as well as raises money to benefit Wounded Warriors, ROTC scholarships, and other entities helping our heroes who have defended our freedoms. The southern Nevada chapter spearheaded the Veterans Court Program, which gives veterans a second chance and helps to expunge misdemeanors from their records, so long as they participate in a rehabilitation program, perform community service, and maintain a positive lifestyle.

Southern Nevada's military community is fortunate to have this chapter working as an ally to improve the lives of veterans. The organization also advocates on behalf of America's national defense, an issue I believe is crucial for our country. I am grateful to each and every member of this organization for their service and sacrifice in defending our Nation. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women who sacrifice their lives for our freedoms. Their service is invaluable to our country.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have had no greater honor than the opportunity to engage with the men and women who served in our Nation's military. I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am grateful to have organizations like the southern Nevada chapter working towards a common goal: fighting to ensure the needs of our veterans are met.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, an organization with a noble and charitable mission. I am humbled and honored to recognize its 50th anniversary, and I wish to thank all of the hard-working members for everything they do.●

REMEMBERING THAIS F. O'DONNELL BLATNIK

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of a dear friend and a remarkable West Virginian who passed away on December 9th, 2015. Former West Virginia State senator and house of delegates member, Thais F. O'Donnell Blatnik, was a dedicated public servant and an inspiring leader who was respected and admired by all who knew her. She led an extraordinary life that will always be remembered in the hearts of the countless individuals whose lives she touched.

Thais was a proud West Virginian from our State's northern panhandle. She was born and raised in the town of Weirton, where she grew up with her loving parents and her two younger sisters, Eileen and Kay. It was there in the small town of Weirton that Thais would plant her roots and cultivate an inherent love and commitment to her community, the northern panhandle region, and her entire State.

Thais went on to live a long and prosperous life, filled with immense success. But she never strayed too far from her loved ones and friends in Weirton and the northern panhandle. After graduating from high school, she attended and graduated from West Liberty University and launched a tireless career in journalism. After college, Thais returned to her beloved hometown to work for the Weirton Daily Times. She also spent part of her career working for the Wheeling Intelligencer and as an editor for the Dominion Post.

During her journalism career, Thais developed her inquisitive nature along with her passion for asking the hard questions. She was a true force, and she was tough but fair when it came to telling the news. She covered all levels of politics, and she even had the opportunity to interview three U.S. Presidents: President Kennedy, President Ford, and President Roosevelt. As a result of her work in journalism, she was emboldened to run for office herself and to stand up for the northern panhandle communities she loved so dearly.

Just as Thais was a fierce journalist, she became an equally strong and passionate public servant. Genuinely committed to improving the lives of all West Virginians, she represented Ohio County for 8 years in the house of delegates and another 8 years in the State senate. I was proud to work alongside her and call her my colleague during my time in the State senate. Thais spent her time at the statehouse fighting to improve the lives of all West Virginians, but specifically women and children and those struggling with mental health and disabilities. She was honored for her great work and for her service as Mental Health Directors Legislator of the Year and recognized by the West Virginia Association for the Developmentally Disabled for her faithful work helping children with exceptionalities. Thais also served as

the executive director of the Wheeling Area Training Center for the Handicapped, WATCH.

Thais was not only reputable and accomplished in her public life, but she was also an unparalleled example of a devoted wife, a proud mother, and a wonderful grandmother. She was married to the late Dr. Albert M. Blatnik for more than 48 years and paid tribute to him in a book she wrote titled "Here's Al." Thais received love and support throughout her life from Al as well as her children—Floyd, Judy, and David—and her grandchildren—Katie, Jack, Joe, Maggie, and Sam—who lovingly called her "Meme." During their lives, Thais and Al led their grandchildren across the country introducing them to exciting new experiences.

Anyone who knew Thais Blatnik can tell you about her incredible passion for her community and her State and her ability to inspire each person she encountered. She made a difference throughout West Virginia and will be forever remembered for her many years of service. She was truly a hero to so many in our State, and though she will be greatly missed, her memory will always live on.●

RECOGNIZING THE HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Henry Ford Health System as it celebrates delivering a century of high-quality and innovative health care services to the metropolitan Detroit community.

In 1909, Henry Ford, David Whitney, and a few other leading Detroit-area businessmen recognized the need for a major health care center in Detroit and set out to open Detroit General Hospital. After experiencing several years of delays, Henry Ford took over the entire project and renamed the facility "Henry Ford Hospital", which opened its doors to the public on October 1, 1915.

From the outset, Henry Ford was focused upon adapting the insights and innovations he pioneered in the automotive industry for use in the delivery of health care services. Among his innovations were a first-in-the-Nation center for treating chemical dependency and an accountability system for promoting shorter patient waiting times. Over the years, Henry Ford Health System's commitment to innovation saw breakthroughs in the administration of electrocardiograms, improvements in the design of hospital beds, and advancements in medication regimens for treating bacterial infections.

Throughout its history, Henry Ford Health System has been committed to meet the evolving needs of the metro Detroit region. Recognizing the need for access to low-cost health care services, Henry Ford Hospital partnered with the State of Michigan in 1970 to

create the Community Health and Social Services, CHASS, clinic in southwest Detroit. Around the same time, Henry Ford Health System also began partnering with the Detroit public schools to provide in-school health services to students.

With the growing population in Detroit's suburbs, Henry Ford Health System began to expand, opening new medical centers in Troy, Dearborn, and West Bloomfield. Today Henry Ford Health System has grown from a single facility with 48 beds into a regional health care provider which admits around 89,000 patients each year and delivers approximately 3.5 million clinic visits. The staff has also grown to more than 23,000 employees, making Henry Ford Health System the fifth largest employer in the Metro Detroit region.

In recognition of its outstanding commitment to delivering world-class health care services in a novel and effective manner, Henry Ford Health System is the only organization to receive all five major health care quality awards: the Foster G. McGaw Prize in 2004, the Joint Commission's Ernest Amory Codman and John M. Eisenberg Awards in 2006 and 2011, the American Hospital Association's McKesson Quest for Quality Prize in 2010, and the Malcolm Baldrige Award in 2011. As a recipient of the Baldrige Award, Henry Ford Health System joins an elite group of organizations who have been recognized for outstanding innovations in their respective fields.

I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Henry Ford Health System's 100th anniversary. This significant milestone is a great opportunity to reflect upon its century-long record of fostering innovations in the development and delivery of health care services, its commitment to providing the best possible outcomes for its patients, and the transformative effect it continues to make, both in the health care field and metro Detroit. Henry Ford Health System has made a remarkable impact in southeast Michigan over the last century, and I wish its leadership, medical professionals, and staff well in continuing to fulfill its mission in the years and decades ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE HAIGANUSH R. BEDROSIAN

• Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as this year draws to a close, so too does a long and accomplished legal career for Rhode Island Family Court Chief Judge Haiganush R. Bedrosian. She will retire from the bench at the end of December after serving on the family court for over 35 years. Judge Bedrosian is a trailblazer and a skilled leader in the Rhode Island legal community. She will be missed.

Judge Bedrosian, the daughter of Armenian immigrants, is a lifelong Rhode Islander who grew up in Cranston. She attended Cranston East High School

and then Brown University's Pembroke College, where she graduated with a degree in political science in 1965.

She says that when she graduated from Pembroke, she was told "women don't go to law school" and she had best look for work elsewhere. That didn't sound right to her.

Judge Bedrosian enrolled at Suffolk Law School, where she excelled. She earned a clerkship with Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Thomas Paolino. After her clerkship, she rose quickly in the legal profession, serving as an assistant general counsel for the Providence & Worcester Railroad, representing children in private practice and serving as a special assistant to the Rhode Island Attorney General in the Criminal Division.

In 1980, Rhode Island Governor J. Joseph Garrahy nominated her to serve on Rhode Island's family court, making her the first woman to sit on the family court bench. Over the course of her tenure, she has built a reputation for fairness, compassion, and thorough command of the law. She has deftly handled some of the most complex and difficult cases to come before the Court.

She rose to the position of chief judge on the family court in 2010—an other first for a woman in Rhode Island—where she has proven herself an able leader. She has promoted mediation as a way to resolve challenging family disputes more quickly and with less stress on the parties involved. She has advocated for improvements to the way juveniles are treated in our justice system, both at the State and Federal levels. She has worked to combat human trafficking and sexual violence. And she has expanded the family treatment drug court, a smart and effective program to address drug offenses that involve youth and families.

In addition to her good work in the courtroom, Judge Bedrosian has contributed a great deal to her community. She remains a committed member of the congregation of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church in Providence where she is a frequent volunteer. She has also founded and served as president of the Rhode Island Trial Judges Association.

We will miss Judge Bedrosian's steady hand and compassionate, reasoned rulings on the bench. But we wish her well in the next chapter of her life. Best of luck, Your Honor.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2130. An act to provide legal certainty to property owners along the Red River in Texas, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2130. An act to provide legal certainty to property owners along the Red River in Texas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-124. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alabama applying to the United States Congress, pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States, to call a convention of the states limited to proposing amendments that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office of federal government officials; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 112

Whereas, the Founders of our Constitution empowered state legislators to be guardians of liberty against future abuses of power by the federal government; and

Whereas, the federal government has created a crushing national debt through improper and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, the federal government has invaded the legitimate roles of the states through the manipulative process of federal mandates, most of which are unfunded to a great extent; and

Whereas, the federal government has ceased to live under a proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas, it is the solemn duty of the states to protect the liberty of our people, particularly for the generations to come, to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States through a Convention of the States under Article V to place clear restraints on these and related abuses of power: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Legislature of Alabama, both houses thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of Alabama hereby applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention of the states limited to proposing amendments that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials. This is an application for a Convention of States. By definition, a Convention of States requires the equality of all state parties necessitating a rule of one state, one vote. Congress has no authority to adopt any rule to the contrary; and be it further

Resolved, This application is adopted with the understanding that the Legislature will, by law or rule, create rules for its appointment of delegates to any Convention of States, including rules that govern the duty of commissioners or delegates to strictly adhere to the limited subject matter of the convention contained in the state's application; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate and to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States Congress from this state; and to also transmit copies hereof to the presiding officers of each of the legislative