

TRIBUTE TO MIKE DUNCAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a distinguished Kentuckian, a man who knows the meaning of public service, who I am proud to call a friend. Robert M. "Mike" Duncan will be celebrating his 65th birthday next month, and I want to wish him great happiness and every success on such a special occasion.

Mike is well known in Kentucky and nationally for wearing many hats. Currently he serves as the president and CEO of the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, a national nonprofit organization that advocates for coal miners in Kentucky and elsewhere and for the use of coal as an affordable and reliable resource in our Nation's energy mix.

Mike has served the Republican Party in many roles, most notably as the 60th Chairman of the Republican National Committee, RNC, from 2007 to 2009. He came to that role having previously served as treasurer and general counsel of the RNC before his election as chairman.

During his career, Mike's served on the campaigns of five Presidents. He worked in the White House as the assistant director of the Office of Public Liaison. He was appointed to the President's Commission on White House Fellows in 2001, and later served as the chairman and a board member of the Tennessee Valley Authority. He served in various roles with the U.S.-China High Level Political Party Leaders Dialogue and the Center for Rural Development.

Mike is also active politically in Kentucky at every level. He has served as a precinct captain to a county chairman to the State chairman to the national chairman. In 1998, he chaired Jim Bunning's successful U.S. Senate race. Mike's involvement with Kentucky politics dates back to his time interning for the Kentucky General Assembly, when he got the chance to serve as President Richard Nixon's driver when the President was campaigning for reelection in the Bluegrass State.

Mike is also active with numerous nonprofit organizations. He is a trustee of the Christian Appalachian Project and runs a student mentoring program. He has been recognized with honorary degrees from several schools, including the College of the Ozarks, Cumberland College, and Morehead State University.

In his professional life, Mike is the principal owner, along with his wife, Joanne, of two community banks with five offices in eastern Kentucky. He has served as the president of the Kentucky Bankers Association and as a director of the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank Cincinnati Branch.

Mike holds degrees from Cumberland College and the University of Kentucky College of Law. He and Joanne call Inez, KY, their home; and they have a son, Rob, who is an assistant U.S. attorney.

Mike was 8 years old when his uncle ran for superintendent of schools. It was volunteering for his uncle's campaign that sparked his love of politics, and we are glad that it did. He has been of great service to the people of Kentucky and to the people of this Nation for many years, and we owe him our gratitude.

I want to wish Mike a very happy birthday, and I know my colleagues join me in recognizing his achievements and wishing him many happy returns.

Thank you, Mike, for your service to the Party and to our country.

THIRD ANNUAL CESAR CHAVEZ
DAY-LAS VEGAS FESTIVAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the third annual Cesar Chavez Day-Las Vegas Festival. Since 2013, the Las Vegas City Council, the Cesar Chavez Committee, and Councilmember Bob Coffin have organized this community festival in Las Vegas to honor the lasting legacy of civil rights activist and labor leader, Cesar Chavez.

Cesar Chavez led a courageous and humble life. He was born on March 31, 1927, in a small farm outside of Yuma, AZ. His experiences as a laborer and migrant worker in the fields of the southwest United States encouraged his pilgrimage from Delano to Sacramento, CA. He brought attention to the workplace inequities experienced by those who tilled America's soil and harvested America's crops. Alongside Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and United Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez fought tirelessly to raise salaries and improve the working conditions of farm workers. He organized migrant workers to raise awareness for the humane and fair treatment of all workers. Today Mr. Chavez's legacy inspires hope, action, and prosperity for those who are often burdened by marginalization and discrimination. His contributions will forever be embedded in the fabric of our country, and we owe gratitude to the indelible mark that Cesar Chavez has left on our Nation.

Cesar Chavez dedicated his time to a life of purpose in bringing social justice and dignity to the workplace. As we commemorate his meaningful work and contributions, it is vital that we continue his legacy by fighting for higher wages, worker rights, and the fair treatment of all workers. I commend the Las Vegas City Council, the Cesar Chavez Committee, and Councilmember Bob Coffin for commemorating Cesar Chavez, and I join in honoring Mr. Chavez's visionary leadership.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY
MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 29 years ago, March was designated National Women's History Month. It is hard to

imagine, but as recently as the 1970s, history books largely left out the contributions of women in America. This began to change in 1978, when a small group set out to revise the school curriculum in their community—Sonoma County, CA. The idea was to create a Women's History Week, and its goal was to write women back into history books. It was an idea that was long overdue. And Women's History Week took off around the county . . . around the State . . . and across the Nation. It didn't take long before organizers lobbied Congress and even the White House. And on February 28, 1980, it paid off.

President Jimmy Carter announced for the first time that March 2-8, 1980, would be designated as National Women's History Week. He urged libraries, schools, and community organizations to focus on leaders who struggled for equality: Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucy Stone, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cody Stanton, Harriet Tubman, and Alice Paul. In 1981, the cause gained further momentum when an unlikely partnership between then-Representative BARBARA MIKULSKI and Senator ORRIN HATCH cosponsored a congressional resolution for National Women's History Week. And 6 short years later, National Women's History Week became National Women's History Month. And last November, Senator MIKULSKI was awarded the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in part for her work on equal pay for women—what an honor.

Throughout history, women have achieved significant progress in the face of discrimination and, time and time again, blazed new trails. So it is appropriate that Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI would play such an integral role in creating National Women's History Month. After all, she understands the role of a trailblazer better than many. And during her last year in the U.S. Senate, it is fitting we honor some of her accomplishments. Senator MIKULSKI was the first woman elevated to a leadership post in the U.S. Senate and the only current Member of Congress in the National Women's Hall of Fame. She is also the first woman elected to Congress in her own right, not because of a husband or a father or someone who served before her in higher office. Senator MIKULSKI embodies what National Women's History Month is all about, particularly this year, when its theme is "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government."

So with that in mind, I would like to tell you a story about Senator MIKULSKI, also known in this chamber as the Dean of Women. Following the election of a number of esteemed women into the Senate, a lot of reporters deemed 1992, the Year of the Woman, but Senator MIKULSKI didn't like the sound of that.

She said: "Calling 1992 the Year of the Woman makes it sound like the

Year of the Caribou or the Year of the Asparagus. We're not a fad, fancy or a year."

That is classic for Senator MIKULSKI.

Today there are a record 20 female Members in the Senate, but BARBARA would be the first to point out that is still a minority, and we can do better. Well, after 40 years in Congress, Senator MIKULSKI will be sorely missed. Without the leadership and determination of Senator MIKULSKI, the fight gets a little harder, and there is plenty of work to do.

Women still receive an average of 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, and it is even greater for women of color. African-American women make 64 cents for every dollar earned by men, and Hispanic women only make 56 cents. It is not right, and it is long past time that Congress pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to provide women with the necessary tools to fight wage discrimination. It is also time to guarantee paid family and medical leave for all. Making this a reality will mean that when major life events happen, birth of a new child or caring for an aging parent, hard-working Americans will not have to choose between their family and debt, bankruptcy, or losing their job. But America can overcome these challenges. We have done it before. Just look how far we have come.

Here are just a few of the problems women faced and overcame since the 1970s: women could be fired from the workplace for being pregnant; sexual harassment wasn't recognized in the workplace; women couldn't get a credit card; and marital rape wasn't considered a crime in most States. But we solved these discriminatory and heinous practices. You see, America's democracy has indeed been imperfect, but throughout our history, we have sought to address our Nation's imperfections. Because the story of the United States is not a story of a perfect union, it is a story about the pursuit to create "a more perfect union."

Let me close with this. Years ago, in my home State of Illinois, then First Lady Hillary Clinton said: "If you go to the poorest places on Earth struggling from social problems of poverty, disease, and hunger and all that comes with it, and you can only ask one question to determine if they have a chance, the question you should ask is this: How do you treat your women?"

If you give women an equal playing field, status, education, and opportunity, you are giving them and your country a chance to thrive.

This March, as we pay tribute to all the brave women who have moved this country forward and in doing so inspired each and every one of us, let's challenge ourselves to build on their legacies and make our country a more equal society for our mothers, sisters, and daughters.

TRIBUTE TO DON HOOPER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize Don Hooper,

a great Vermonter who is soon to retire from the National Wildlife Federation.

Don is a great environmental conservationist whose advice I have sought for at least 20 years on issues affecting Vermont, the United States, and indeed the planet. For 17 years, Don has helped lead the National Wildlife Federation, NWF, in Vermont and the region. He helped to bring the peregrine falcon back from the brink of extinction in Vermont and to restore our State's breeding population of bald eagles. Beyond Vermont, he advocated for piping plovers, wolves, Atlantic salmon, and more. Don helped the NWF become one of the first organizations to sound the alarm about the accelerating impacts of climate change and to pull together coalitions of environmental advocates, conservationists, and sportsmen and sportswomen to push for solutions.

Don's public service extends beyond his conservation leadership. He worked hard in the mid-1990s as Vermont's Secretary of State to reduce barriers to the ballot box and to make government more open and accessible, priorities both he and I share.

Many Vermonters also celebrate Don's 8 years representing the towns of Randolph, Brookfield, and Braintree in Vermont's General Assembly, when Don led efforts to divest pension funds from South African investments, helped to craft significant environmental and planning legislation, and achieved what would be unthinkable in most States—a political redistricting map that was adopted by near consensus.

And as is the story with any great Vermonter, Don's foundation has been his family. Since 1974, the Hooper's Brookfield farm, worked by Don, his wife, Allison, and sons, Sam, Jay, and Miles, has been a mainstay of the community. They have sold hay, vegetables, goat's milk, and meat from the farm to friends and neighbors. Don helped found the Montpelier Farmers Market that Marcelle and I visit whenever we are home in the summer. With Allison in the lead and Don doing much heavy lifting and dishwashing, the Hoopers became cheesemakers and founded the Vermont Butter and Cheese Company, which has thrived for 32 years, employs 77 people directly, supports many more Vermont farmers, and has Vermont's specialty cheese industry on the international culinary map.

On top of all of this, Don is a volunteer for the fire department and a member of the local Farm Bureau. It is hard to think of a more dedicated member of the community.

These are just some of the layers of Don's life in Vermont. He has also done great work as a Peace Corps volunteer in Botswana and in the leadership of national organizations. Don Hooper stands as tall as ever in retirement, and while this might conclude his leadership of the NWF in Vermont, I know

it will not be the last we hear and see of this great Vermonter.

RECOGNIZING THE "USS MONTPELIER"

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as a native of Montpelier and as one who attended the christening of the USS *Montpelier*, I was so happy to see an article in the Times Argus regarding its return to the United States after a 6-month deployment last month. Steve Martin and Debra Smith have both been involved for years and supported the crew of the USS *Montpelier*. Marcelle and I had a memorable time at a picnic they held for the crew in Middlesex. As a Vermonter, they both make me proud, and I wanted my fellow Senators to see what they have done.

I ask unanimous consent that the Times Argus article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Times Argus, Feb. 8, 2016]

USS MONTPELIER RETURNS TO STATES

(By Josh O'Gorman)

NORFOLK, Va.—The USS *Montpelier* has returned home to the United States following a six-month deployment.

Friday afternoon, the submarine—the third naval vessel to share the name of Vermont's capital—docked at Naval Station Norfolk after logging more than 38,000 nautical miles during its most recent deployment.

The crew of the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine, which includes 15 officers and 129 enlisted crew, spent the recent deployment supporting national security interests in Europe and the Middle East, with stops in Bahrain, France, Greece and the United Arab Emirates.

"I have been connected with this amazing group of men for 14 or 15 years now," said Debra Smith, of Middlesex, who chairs the Veterans and Family Support Committee for the Montpelier VFW.

Smith's support for the sailors of the USS *Montpelier* began with her efforts to keep them entertained while at sea. Smith, who used to operate Capital Video in Montpelier before it closed, would send the sailors movies to watch during their down time.

Most recently, Smith organized an effort in which students from Hardwick Elementary School are making "Welcome Home" and Valentine's Day cards, which are expected to go out in the mail to the crew this week.

Both Smith and Steve Martin, also of Middlesex, have been passengers of the 360-foot submarine, which was commissioned in 1993 and which launched the first Tomahawk cruise missiles during the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

"It was pretty awesome," Martin said. "It's pretty tight in there. We spent the day out at sea and when they surfaced we were able to go up on the bridge with the captain."

He also described the steepness with which the submarine dives and surfaces.

"You're keeping your balance and your face is a few feet from the floor," Martin said.

Next month, Smith and Martin will take a road trip that will include a stop in Norfolk to visit the boat and its crew.