

congratulate her on many years of hard work for the city of Sparks and her recent election to the Nevada State Senate.

As a graduate of the University of Nevada at Reno, UNR, Councilwoman Ratti is an exemplary role model who is truly devoted to the citizens of Sparks and Nevada. Before she was elected to the Sparks City Council, Councilwoman Ratti founded and served as president of Strategic Management Services, a consultant firm providing nonprofit and government services. Additionally, Councilwoman Ratti worked as an influential leader for young women as a Girl Scouts of the USA nonprofit manager and former executive.

Since her first term as councilwoman in 2008, she remained committed to helping the Sparks community by serving as a strong advocate for initiatives that helped meet the needs of the city's most vulnerable. Specifically, as chair of the city's redevelopment agency, Councilwoman Ratti focused on improving infrastructure and development in areas around Victorian Square, as well as refining recreational facilities. She also served on the Washoe County District Board of Health, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Capital Funding Protection Committee and Oversight Committee for School Facilities, and the Sparks Legislative Team.

Councilwoman Ratti's impact on local businesses and her relentless advocacy for improving the Sparks community should serve as an example to all. Her steadfast support for the children of Sparks, as well as her entire constituency, will be remembered and missed. Councilwoman Ratti's leadership and achieved success throughout northern Nevada proves her dedication to community service, and she should be proud of her accomplishments throughout her tenure as a Sparks city councilwoman. I am grateful for her commitment to Sparks and to the great State of Nevada.

Today I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Councilwoman Ratti on his retirement, and I offer my deepest appreciation for all that she has done for Sparks and Nevada. I offer my best wishes for many fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO RON SCHMITT

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Councilman Ron Schmitt, of Sparks, on his retirement. After serving as a member of the Sparks City Council for 15 years, Councilman Schmitt retired on November 14, 2016. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate him on his retirement after many years of hard work and dedication to the city of Sparks.

Councilman Schmitt is an outstanding example of someone who is devoted to improving their community. Upon moving to the Silver State and living in the Sparks area for more than

two decades, Northern Nevada has greatly benefitted from Councilman Schmitt's leadership in and out of public office. Before taking on the role as city councilman in 2001, Councilman Schmitt served on the Washoe County Human Services Consortium Advisory Board as member and chair, the Sparks Planning Commission, and the Sparks Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Schmitt was also a member of the National League of Cities and Municipalities and once served on its board of directors.

Since his first term as city councilman, he consistently remained committed to the people of Sparks and has been a strong advocate for initiatives that meet the needs of families. Additionally, while in office, Councilman Schmitt managed RPS Consultant Enterprise, as principal, served as president of the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, NLCM, and was selected as the "Public Official of the Year" by the NLCM in 2005. He also dedicated much of his time to the Regional Transportation Commission Paratransit Advisory Committee and the crisis call center.

Councilman Schmitt's participation in local business and community programs led him to be a tremendous leader within local government. His unwavering support and focus to ensuring the needs of his constituency were met will be truly missed. Councilman Schmitt remains a prominent leader and will continue to advocate on behalf of the Sparks community. He exemplifies the highest standards of community service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. I am grateful for his loyalty and commitment to Sparks and to the great State of Nevada.

Today I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Councilman Schmitt on his retirement, and I offer my deepest appreciation for all that he has done for Sparks and Nevada. I offer my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JANET SNYDER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Janet Snyder for tirelessly supporting Nevada's veterans and military families, particularly military spouses and widows. Mrs. Snyder is dedicated to giving back to the brave men and women who defend our freedom and has contributed greatly to the Las Vegas military community and to the greater good of the Silver State.

Mrs. Snyder understands the many sacrifices military families make on a daily basis. As an army wife, mother of three, grandmother of six, and great-grandmother of five, she stands as a shining example of someone who has devoted her life to the betterment of others, selflessly serving to advocate for the interests of our Nation's heroes and their families each day. Her dedication reminds us all of the importance of thanking the men and women serving this great Nation, as well as their families, for their countless sacrifices.

Since the passing of her husband of 52 years, Mrs. Snyder has provided unwavering support and care for military widows as president of several military wives clubs and support groups. In fact, Mrs. Snyder was recently installed as president of the National Society of Military Widows in October of 2016. The Silver State is grateful and honored to have a Nevadan leading this critical organization. Additionally, Mrs. Snyder is the secretary and acting treasurer of the Society of Military Widows of Southern Nevada Chapter 34 and was also the founding president from 2012 to 2015. Mrs. Snyder is also an active member of multiple religious groups. She was editor of the Military Jewish Chapel Newsletter and directed and participated in many projects with local religious leaders from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish communities.

Mrs. Snyder is also known for her outstanding advocacy for military widows by fighting against unfair benefit adjustments that negatively impact families of deceased veterans. Specifically, she has played a pivotal role in fighting for legislation, S. 979, to reverse the offset of the Survivor Benefit Plan, SBP, and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, DIC, programs so that spouses of late military retirees fairly receive their deserved benefits without any deductions. As a cosponsor of this bill in the Senate and as a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I truly admire Mrs. Snyder's commitment to these families and believe she is an extraordinary role model to all Nevadans.

Mrs. Snyder's hard work has not gone unnoticed. I extend my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Snyder for her noble contributions to the Las Vegas military community. Her service to Nevada places her among the most remarkable men and women of the State, and acknowledgement of her dedication is well deserved.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing Mrs. Snyder and her work with veterans and their families. Her efforts are both honorable and necessary. I wish her the best of luck in all of her future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. MATTI VAZEEN

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dr. Matti Vazeen, an incredible ophthalmologist, for the unwavering care and support he provides to all of his patients in northern Nevada. Dr. Vazeen stands as a true example of someone who has spent many years dedicated to the Silver State.

Before settling in Nevada, Dr. Vazeen studied at Northwestern University and completed his residency from Louisiana State University in New Orleans. He established himself in Northern Nevada in 1999 and has worked in the Carson Valley area ever since. Dr. Vazeen is a well-known, prominent eye physician who specializes in serving seniors. Many of Dr. Vazeen's patients rely on his expertise and appreciate his

humility as their physician. I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge Dr. Vazeen for his outstanding work and selfless commitment to his patients in our State's capital.

Dr. Vazeen has served on several industry-related boards, such as the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. Dr. Vazeen has also performed charitable cataract surgery in developing countries and has hosted multiple speaking seminars at the Ispahani Islamia Eye Institute and Hospital in Bangladesh. Additionally, Dr. Vazeen was a pioneer in the establishment of a teaching exchange program between the University of California, Davis and the Islamia Institute, which facilitates developmental training for medical students finishing their residencies. Dr. Vazeen's years of service and commitment to helping others is truly inspiring and praiseworthy.

I am grateful for Dr. Vazeen's dedication to the people of Nevada. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and should be proud of his hard work that highly benefits many Nevadans. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Vazeen, and I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada a better place. I offer him my best wishes for many fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DALE SANDSTROM

● Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dale Sandstrom, who is retiring from the North Dakota Supreme Court after 24 years of devoted service.

Justice Sandstrom is a fifth-generation North Dakotan. Born in Grand Forks, he grew up in Fargo and graduated first from North Dakota State University and then from the University of North Dakota School of Law.

After law school, Justice Sandstrom began his career in public service. He came to Washington, DC, to work under Senator Milton R. Young, who was North Dakota's 15th Senator and, for a time, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate.

Justice Sandstrom returned to North Dakota to work on the North Dakota Criminal Justice Commission. He then served for 6 years as assistant attorney general and headed the office's Consumer Fraud and Antitrust Division. In 1981, North Dakota Governor Allen I. Olson appointed Justice Sandstrom to his cabinet as the State securities commissioner.

Two years later, in 1983, Justice Sandstrom was appointed to the North Dakota Public Service Commission, a position to which he was elected in 1984 and then reelected to in 1990. During his tenure on the commission, he served two terms as its president.

In 1992, Justice Sandstrom was elected to the North Dakota Supreme Court. He was reelected to two 10-year terms in 1996 and 2006 and was a member of the court during my time as Governor of North Dakota.

Justice Sandstrom chairs the North Dakota Supreme Court's Joint Procedure Committee and the North Dakota Advisory Commission on Cameras in the Courtroom. He is also a member of the court's Joint Committee on Attorney Standards and is a past chairman of the court's Technology Committee, the North Dakota Judicial Conference, and the North Dakota Judges Association.

North Dakotans have tremendous access to justice, and the State is a leader in court technology because of Justice Sandstrom's work. In 1996, he created the court's award-winning website, and in 2011, North Dakota became the first State in the country to have its entire trial court system on an electronic record system.

Justice Sandstrom is married to Gail Hagerty, who is a judge for the North Dakota South Central Judicial District. Together, they have three children and live in Bismarck.

Throughout his life, Justice Sandstrom has distinguished himself through his example of integrity and hard work, especially during his tenure on the North Dakota Supreme Court. He has shown not only outstanding knowledge of law, but also wisdom in applying it. He has been a mentor to his law clerks, as well as the State bar.

Outside of his work on the court, Justice Sandstrom is an active member in the Bismarck community. An Eagle Scout, he remains active in scouting and received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award for his involvement.

We honor Justice Sandstrom for his excellent work, and we celebrate his achievements. His efforts have made our State a safer and better place to live, and we commemorate him for his dedication to the people of North Dakota. The court has been well-served by his thoughtful opinions from the bench, and North Dakota will always be grateful for his service to our State.●

TRIBUTE TO CYRIL KOFI GUNU

● Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I recognize Cyril "Kofi" Gunu, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Kofi is a graduate of Brandon High School in Brandon, SD. He attends Augustana University in Sioux Falls, where he studies economics and political science. He is a positive and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his experience and who has been a true asset to the office.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Kofi for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

VERMONT FEDERAL EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATION 2016 AWARDS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, to commemorate Public Recognition

Week, the Vermont Federal Executive Association—VTFEA—recognized the more than 4,000 Federal employees working across the State and the good work they do every day. I would like to offer special congratulations to the 2016 Excellence in Government award winners, who have been recognized by VTFEA for their exemplary government service: Vermont Federal Team of the Year Award, The Northwest Vermont Locality Pay Committee—Brandon Ackel, Transportation Security Administration; Robert Brugman, National Credit Union Administration; Brian Johansson, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Kelly Larsen, Federal Aviation Administration, Alaska; Bruce McDonald, Transportation Security Administration; Sean McVey, U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Mark Nielsen, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Jeff Ostlund, Transportation Security Administration; Corey Price, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Texas; Lisa Rees, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Diana Richardson, Federal Aviation Administration; Krista Scheele, Transportation Security Administration.

In November 2012, VTFEA discussed what initiatives would benefit the most Federal employees, and it didn't take long to realize that securing locality pay for Vermont was the No. 1 priority. In early 2013, VTFEA created a Locality Pay Committee, consisting of employees from six Federal agencies. Working tirelessly, the team prepared a locality pay proposal for northwest Vermont and, in December 2013, presented it to the Federal Salary Council in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, the first proposal was denied, so the following year, they tried again. Again, the proposal was denied. Not to be discouraged, the team drafted a third proposal in November 2015, and committee members traveled to Washington at their own expense to support the package and their fellow Vermonsters. At the hearing, the council approved the package, which is waiting for approval by the President's pay agent and the President. The Northwest Vermont Locality Pay Committee's tenacity, collaborative spirit, and positivity is why Vermont is being considered for locality pay. And it is because of their efforts that VTFEA chose them as Federal Team of the Year.●

TRIBUTE TO SETH DIASIO

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Seth DiAsio, an intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Seth is a graduate of the College of Charleston in Charleston, SC, having earned a degree in studio art. Currently, he is attending American University Washington College of Law, where he is focusing on the law of intellectual property. Seth is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of his experience.