

copy shall be filed and retained in the archives of the Commission upon its organization. This MSC Compact shall become effective upon the enactment of concurring legislation by the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the State of Maryland, and consent thereto by Congress and when all other acts or actions have been taken, including, without limitation, the signing and execution of this MSC Compact by the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

“L. Conflict of Laws

“60. Any conflict between any authority granted herein, or the exercise of such authority, and the provisions of the WMATA Compact shall be resolved in favor of the exercise of such authority by the Commission.

“61. All other general or special laws inconsistent with this MSC Compact are hereby declared to be inapplicable to the Commission or its activities.”

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

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EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, this week, our Nation observes National Police Week. This year, during National Police Week, we pay tribute to 143 officers who died in the line of duty during 2016—among them, Sergeant Allen David Brandt of the Fairbanks Police Department. I come to the floor to acknowledge not only Sergeant Brandt but all those officers who served us so honorably.

Sergeant Brandt's wife Natasha and children, Fritz, Kate, Claire, and Belle have traveled all the way from Fairbanks to participate in the events this week. They are accompanied by Allen's best friend, Officer Phil McBroom of the North Pole Police Department, as well as a large group of colleagues from the Fairbanks Police Department, led by Chief Eric Jewkes.

Chief Jewkes, joined by Sergeant Lockwood and Officer Werner, came into Washington for Police Week in a somewhat unique way. They joined 2,200 officers from around the Nation in a 4-day charity bike ride from Northern New Jersey to Washington, DC. They call it the Police Unity Tour, and their motto is: “We ride for those who died.”

Police Week begins with the dedication of names added this year to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial on Judiciary Square. That dedication occurs during a very, very moving candlelight vigil at the beginning of Police Week. The candlelight vigil was conducted on Saturday evening on the National Mall this year.

Chief Jewkes, in full uniform, read Allen's name before a crowd numbering

10,000 people or more. A bell was rung, acknowledging the loss of Allen David Brandt. Allen's name was the only Alaska name added to the wall this year.

I wish to thank Craig Floyd, who is the president of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, for the courtesy in affording Chief Jewkes this special honor.

Allen's name is now inscribed in perpetuity on the memorial wall among the 21,000 officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. His name appears on the bottom of Panel 21-East. This week, the shoulder patch of the Fairbanks Police Department is affixed at the top of that panel. Quite coincidentally, a few lines up on that same panel are the names of Officers Matt Tokuoka and Anthony Wallace of the Hoonah Police Department, who were brought down by an assailant's bullet in 2010.

During Police Week, we do not dwell on the circumstances under which law enforcement officers gave their lives. We rather focus on how they lived their exemplary lives, and, yes, we pay our respects to the fallen, but Police Week also looks forward. The annual survivor's seminar, sponsored by Concerns of Police Survivors, which helps those who have suffered a law enforcement tragedy grieve and ultimately recover, is an important part of this week as well.

While so much of Police Week is for the law enforcement family, those of us in Washington cannot help but notice what is going on around us—officers in uniform, honor guards, motorcycles, police cars from around the country, the entire law enforcement family—Federal, State, local, Tribal, and visiting officers from places like Canada, England, and Israel.

Many visiting officers bring their spouses. Some bring their children. We are able to truly see the faces behind those uniforms and those badges, and we can look into the eyes of the families.

Let me say a few words about the children who have come in for the observance. You see them on the Metro, sitting atop their father's shoulders. Daddy is wearing his dress uniform. At the candlelight vigil, one of my staff members witnessed a U.S. Park Police officer, in uniform, explaining to her young daughter the meaning of the ceremony. You experience the words of the children at the memorial wall itself, where Emma Moody, the 10-year-old daughter of a fallen California officer, left a hand-drawn memorial to her dad, and it reads:

When I get to heaven the first thing I am going to do is find you. The second thing I will do is never ever let you go again.

When you experience things like this, you cannot help but appreciate the humanity behind the uniforms—a father, a mother, an aunt, an uncle, a friend, a colleague, a neighbor. Law enforcement is no stranger to controversy. Yet it is so important that we see be-

yond controversy; that when we look at an officer we see the humanity that runs toward danger and not from it; the humanity that responds to every call for service, not knowing whether it will be the last; the humanity that kisses a child goodbye before beginning a shift, not knowing whether he will ever see those children again; the humanity that was Allen Brandt.

The story I just recited is Allen's story. Allen was released from the hospital after being shot five times by an assailant. He died from complications associated with a second series of surgeries.

Allen lived long enough to appear before the Fairbanks City Council and thank the community for their support. He also offered some very cautionary words. He said:

Our officers do a very hard job, most of the time thankless. Working weekends when their friends are with their families. Working nights and sleeping during the day. We need your support and not just when bad things happen.

A few weeks later, Anchorage Police Officer Arn Salao thought he was responding to a call involving a dispute between a cabdriver and his passenger. When he arrived at the scene, he was ambushed and shot four times. Miraculously, Officer Salao survived his injuries.

In spite of these tragedies, it is dispiriting that people continue to challenge law enforcement. Last week, Colonel James Cockrell, retired after 30 years with the Alaska State Troopers, and just prior to his retirement, reflected on the dangers troopers face. Assaults on Alaska State Troopers are up, from 52 in 2013 to 131 last year.

I wish to share with the Senate a few lines from an interview with KTUU in Anchorage. Colonel Cockrell said:

I think there's generally a little bit less respect for law enforcement. I think a lot of that spurred from the Lower 48. We're having troopers contact people in a one-on-one situation. Individuals are more apt to fight with us if they think they have an advantage, when we don't have backup. We don't have two or three troopers responding to a high risk crime in progress. The consequences are that people are more apt to fight with our Troopers.

All of this is deeply tragic. As I look across the Nation, we are not really seeing any signs of abatement. Some might be attributable to the opioid crisis, some to a loss of respect for law enforcement, and some simply because suspects challenge law enforcement in hopes of evading them.

This year, law enforcement has already suffered 48 line-of-duty deaths, 17 of those from gunfire. This fact is not lost on the officers from Interior Alaska who are in our Nation's Capital this week. It is not lost on those who are considering law enforcement careers but decide to perhaps take a pass, leaving critical vacancies in agencies throughout the country. Law enforcement remains very dangerous work, and for all the satisfaction that comes from serving people in their darkest

moments, there are no guarantees the officer will return home.

I hope that, during this National Police Week and throughout the year, we will reflect on Allen Brandt's final words: "Law enforcement needs our support and not just when bad things happen."

In these times, law enforcement needs that support now more than ever. On behalf of my Senate colleagues, I offer my continued condolences to Natasha Brandt and her family, to Allen Brandt's colleagues, and to survivors of law enforcement tragedies everywhere.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CHINA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today as part of my office's Expression NOT Oppression initiative, which highlights human rights abuses around the world and the plight of individuals imprisoned or oppressed for simply exercising their God-given rights.

Earlier this month, we observed World Press Freedom Day, which serves as a reminder that freedom of expression is a fundamental, universal human right and that a free press is vital to a free society.

We should never take for granted the freedom of the press we enjoy here in the United States. These rights are an integral part of the bedrock of any healthy democracy, and in too many parts of the world, they are nonexistent or under assault.

According to Reporters Without Borders' 2017 World Press Freedom Index, press freedom is threatened now more than ever. Governments around the world continue to crack down on their citizens' access to information. Out of 180 countries, Burundi dropped from 156 to 160. Most problematic for press freedom, Egypt dropped from 159 to 161, and Bahrain dropped from 162 to 164.

Additionally, Reporters Without Borders has reported that at least nine journalists have been killed already in 2017. Several were killed in Mexico, here in our own hemisphere. It is hard to believe that people are being thrown in jail or worse simply because government officials don't like what they write or publish, but that is what is happening, especially in countries like China, Russia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, just to name a few.

The case I come to the floor today to highlight is that of Huang Qi, who has long been targeted by the Chinese Government because of his advocacy for the rights of ordinary citizens and his coverage of the Chinese Government's violation of those rights. In November

of last year, the police reportedly burst into his residence and ransacked his home and took him to detention. In December of last year, Chinese prosecutors authorized Huang's arrest for allegedly "illegally providing state secrets overseas," a charge that can result in a sentence of life imprisonment. The Committee to Protect Journalists described his detention as part of "an intensified crackdown on online journalists and bloggers who report on protests and human rights abuses."

Huang founded the 64 Tianwang human rights website in 1998. The Chinese Government has blocked access to 64 Tianwang since 2003, according to Radio Free Asia, because the site covers issues deemed politically sensitive by authorities, such as protests and government corruption.

Authorities previously sentenced Huang to 3 years in prison in November 2009 for "illegal possession of state secrets"—this in connection with his work assisting parents who lost children during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. In addition, Chinese authorities sentenced Huang to 5 years in prison in 2000 for "subversion" for his advocacy on behalf of the families of the 1989 Tiananmen protest victims—a solemn anniversary we will mark next month.

In short, Huang, a veteran activist, is no stranger to the Chinese Government's silencing of dissent. His life's work is a testament to fearless reporting regardless of what consequences may follow. While his own government views him as a threat, outside of China, his work is widely praised and recognized. Reporters Without Borders awarded the 2016 Press Freedom Award to his website. His case has been championed by Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, and others, including the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which I am proud to chair. His case is featured in the Commission's Political Prisoner Database, which presently contains more than 1,400 active prisoner records—a staggering but far from exhaustive number.

Huang is committed to reporting the facts—facts that describe the daily struggles of Chinese citizens. For this, he has suffered greatly, including reported torture and mistreatment in detention, unjust imprisonment, and deprivation of his most basic rights.

The Chinese Government should immediately and unconditionally release him. The United States should make this case and the cases of many others like him languishing unjustly behind bars in China or tortured into "confessing" to "crimes" they did not commit, priorities—we should make these priorities in our bilateral engagement with Beijing.

It is the second point—the torture and mistreatment of rights defenders—that brings to mind another troubling case, that of prominent rights lawyer Xie Yang. His wife, who recently arrived in the United States with her two young children, will testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee later

this week. Xie has bravely taken on sensitive cases, including land grab victims and advocates for democratic reform. Chinese security agents detained him as part of the 709 Crackdown—a sweeping, nationwide campaign against Chinese rights lawyers and advocates that started on July 9, 2015.

The plight of 45-year-old Mr. Xie burst onto the international scene in January 2017 when his attorneys released transcripts of their meetings with him. The transcripts recount the threats of his inquisitors. They said: "We'll torture you to death just like an ant." Another warned: "I'm going to torment you until you go insane." He told his lawyers: "I wanted to end their interrogation of me as quickly as I could, even if it meant death. . . . Later, I wrote down whatever they wanted." As if foreshadowing the fate that awaited him, he had earlier written a letter in detention in which he cautioned, "If one day in the future I admit guilt . . . that will not be a true expression of my my."

Fast-forward to last week. He was charged with "inciting subversion of state power and disrupting court order" and pled guilty in a recorded video released by the court and widely reported in major media outlets. He said: "I want to take this opportunity to express to other rights lawyers my view now that we should give up using contact with foreign media and independent media to hype sensitive news events, attack judicial institutions and smear the image of the nation's party organs while handling cases. . . ."

He continued in that same coerced statement: "Everyone should take me as a warning to certainly stay within the framework of the law and avoid being exploited by Western anti-China forces."

Yet, despite these warnings and the Chinese Government's unyielding assault on human rights, there are still men and women committed to reporting on the government's abuses and steadfast in defending the powerless and the marginalized. Their courage is an inspiration, and it must summon our solidarity.

I look forward to the day when the Chinese Government upholds rather than tramples the rights of its own citizens, abides by the rule of law at home, and respects the international rules-based system globally. However, that day has not yet arrived. Until it does, we must signal to the Chinese people that whatever our broader diplomatic and strategic aims may be as it relates to North Korea or any other issue, America is under no illusions about the iron-fisted leadership of President Xi and his utter disregard for the rights and dignity of his own people.

As President Trump continues fulfilling his duty and appointing individuals to key positions, I will keep raising these issues with each and every relevant nominee whom I meet with