

Because of President Trump and Director Mulvaney's position, it is more important than ever that the essential programs contained in S. 1514 be reauthorized.

None of these reauthorizations are more important to Maryland than EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program. In 1987, Congress ratified the Chesapeake Bay Program, a voluntary partnership among the watershed States and the EPA, under the Clean Water Act. The 1987 legislation supported cleanup efforts with a program of grants and scientific research. In 2000, Congress directed the EPA to "ensure that management plans are developed and implementation is begun" to meet the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. In June 2014, the Governors of the six States in the watershed signed a new voluntary Chesapeake Bay watershed agreement to work in partnership with the Federal Government through the Chesapeake Bay Program. The watershed agreement has ten goals to improve water quality in local rivers and streams and the Chesapeake Bay by 2025.

The program office is housed within the EPA, which provides staff and funding. Primary funding for the program comes from State governments. Federal funding was first authorized at \$40 million annually from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2005 to fund environmental studies and grants that support restoration activities in the Chesapeake Bay. Congress has appropriated funds for the Program since the authorization for appropriations expired in fiscal year 2005. In fiscal year 2017, for instance, Congress appropriated \$73 million for the program. The President's fiscal year 2018 budget eliminates funding for the program and cuts other programs that also benefit the bay across several Federal agency partners' budgets.

A healthy bay means a healthy economy, and this recovery cannot be accomplished without a strong Federal commitment. At a time when we have seen nutrient levels dropping and water quality improving, I am deeply disappointed President Trump is intent on turning the clock back to a time when a swath of the Chesapeake Bay in mid-summer was a hypoxic low-oxygen zone or "dead zone".

The most recent State of the Bay report, issued biannually by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, evaluates the progressing and overall health of the Bay for 2014 to 2016. The Chesapeake Bay's health was given a grade of C-minus, a slight improvement from the previous State of the Bay report in 2014. This progress is due largely to the continued implementation of the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. This improvement, though modest, was hard-won. It is the result of countless hours of grueling work by State and Federal public servants and nonprofit workers, as well as citizens' actions across the watershed. A grade of C-minus is hardly an acceptable end-

point. To reach an A, which would represent a saved and comprehensively healthy Bay, we will need redouble and accelerate our efforts. I am determined to pass on a vibrant and healthy Chesapeake Bay to the next generation, for the sake of public health and the local economies that depend on a clean and bountiful bay. This is all the more reason that we need to reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Program and make sure that it is fully funded in this year's appropriations bill.

Many Marylanders and national wildlife organizations are happy about the HELP for Wildlife Act. The Choose Clean Water Coalition and Blue Water Baltimore have issued statements of support. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation will testify in support of this bill next week in a legislative hearing the Environment and Public Works Committee is holding. The National Wildlife Federation's Collin O'Mara said the bill "represents a great bipartisan effort to conserve America's outdoor heritage for hunters, anglers, campers, hikers, and wildlife enthusiasts, while helping to restore America's wildlife populations." The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership said the bill is "the strongest legislative package of sportsmen's priorities in years."

As S. 1514 moves out of the Environment and Public Works Committee and to the Senate floor in the coming weeks, I urge my colleagues to support this bill that is critical not only to the Chesapeake Bay and the State of Maryland, but to conservation efforts in every State across the Nation.

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I wish to speak about the issue of international religious freedom.

Sadly, in recent months, the nightly news has reported far too many stories of innocent people around the world who have been intentionally targeted in acts of horrible violence simply because of their desire to worship in a way their consciences dictate.

Recently, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association held the first "World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians" in Washington, where participants from 130 countries gathered together, many of whom have faced brutal persecution in their home country because of their faith.

As I am sure my colleagues and most Americans know, Rev. Billy Graham has touched the lives of millions of people in the United States and around the world. He has counseled Presidents and Prime Ministers and has been called America's pastor. As a fellow North Carolinian, I am proud call both Billy Graham and his son Franklin my friends.

As the son of a Presbyterian minister, these recent events reminded me of a letter written by my late father, David Burr, to my grandparents. On Thanksgiving Day 1964, writing from

South Korea as a soldier in the Army, my dad wrote a letter about a special worship service held for troops in a tiny chapel on the side of a hill, just within sight of the 38th Parallel dividing North and South Korea. With rifles in tow, my father and his fellow soldiers made their way through the snow and into the chapel. To their surprise, the man standing up front to conduct the worship was not their usual Protestant or Catholic chaplain, but a young Jewish rabbi and a veteran of the previous war.

In his letter, my father wrote about the beautiful lesson he had heard that day where the scripture reading was from Hosea chapter 6, which says, "The voice of God cried unto His people, What shall I do with you? For your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the dew that goes early away. For I desire goodness, not promises; I desire acknowledgement and not your bargains." My father, deeply moved by the message, then went on to write about the rabbi's powerful benediction prayer that closed the worship: "He that enjoys anything without thanksgiving is as though he robbed God."

Every July Fourth, our country gives thanks for the freedoms we are privileged to have as Americans and celebrates the birth of our Nation. Indeed, the freedoms we enjoy are immortalized in our Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

The Founding Fathers understood that these unalienable rights, including the freedom to worship, was a fundamental human right endowed by our Creator.

As I read from my father's letter, I can see he realized this, too. "All the way back to the barracks," he wrote, "I knew that I was one who was stealing from God, for every day I am enjoying the times that were so full and wonderful there at home. Every day, though we are cold and discouraged, my heart is warm with your prayers and thoughts of you, and I have not been thanking God. I have not been fair, for God has walked with me all these years and I have never thought to say thank you to Him."

I share this story today because I believe that, if we as Americans are thankful for these unalienable rights endowed by our Creator, we should also stand up for the millions across the world who are robbed of these same fundamental human rights—and sometimes lose their lives because of it. As Members of the U.S. Senate, we especially should not forget this.

As chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I think about North Korea, I think about Iran, and I think about all the different regions around the world where terrorist activity poses a real threat to our national security. Today I also think about

places like North Korea, Iran, and so many other countries not just in a national security capacity alone, but about the people who are suffering under political systems that deny their fundamental right to freely worship as they choose.

The rabbi's lesson of Hosea chapter 6 that day was about a passage where strength, courage, and hope by the great Hand above were poured into those who were lonesome, afraid, and discouraged. At the end of my dad's letter, he asked my grandfather, "Please, dad, put the benediction of the rabbi over your desk for that is the quickest way you can bring me home." If so, by keeping international religious freedom as a foreign policy priority, I believe that is the quickest way we can bring persecuted people hope.

As my father did in his letter, I close by repeating the rabbi's benediction: "He that enjoys anything without thanksgiving is as though he robbed God." I urge my colleagues: Let's remember to be thankful for the God-given freedoms we enjoy in the United States and to shine a light on the dark corners of the world. Let's not forget in this Congress how we can help the millions who are robbed of these fundamental rights.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO AFGHANISTAN ROBOTICS TEAM

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am very pleased that Afghanistan's robotics team will be coming to Washington to compete with students from nearly 150 countries in the FIRST Global Challenge, which begins on Sunday, July 16. I extend a warm welcome to these brilliant young minds, Lida Azizi, Somayeh Faruqi, Faramarz Najafi, Rodaba Noori, Fatemah Qaderyan, Kawsar Roshan, and Alireza Mahraban. Of course, we extend a warm welcome to the team's creation, a robot that can sort balls, recognize blue and orange, and move objects to their proper places. People across Afghanistan are extremely proud of the robotics team's achievements. In recent days, Americans have become acquainted with the many challenges they have overcome in order to excel in their studies and come to the U.S., and we too, are very proud of them.

I have been impressed to learn about their passion for education and determination to pursue STEM studies. This team's indomitable spirit is a testament to what can be achieved through hard work, creativity, and perseverance. Each member of the Afghan robotics team has become a powerful symbol for young women across the globe, especially for those in developing regions who face barriers to education and opportunity.

The FIRST Robotics Competition should also be recognized for its ability to bring young people together in the name of science, mathematics, and

technology. It is the creation of Granite Stater Dean Kamen, and had its beginnings in a New Hampshire high school gym a quarter century ago. Today, FIRST programs reach more than 400,000 young people across the world every year. Beginning this weekend in Washington, the FIRST Global Challenge will bring some of the best and brightest young people from around the world to compete, to demonstrate teamwork, and to forge new friendships.

It gives me great joy to know that Lida, Somayeh, Faramarz, Rodaba, Fatemah, Kawsar, and Alireza will be among them. The FIRST Global Challenge is a competition, and only one team will leave Washington with top honors, but the seven young women representing Afghanistan are already winners. They have had the courage to overcome barriers and the audacity to compete with some of the most talented young people from across the globe. I wish these young women great success. I thank them for inspiring us with their fierce determination to achieve.

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, today I am honored to congratulate the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges on 80 years of promoting justice for children and families.

On May 22, 1937, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, NCJFCJ, was established by judges who came together with a vision of strengthening the juvenile court system and providing support, sharing knowledge, and facilitating an exchange of ideas with their colleagues across the Nation. The NCJFCJ is the oldest judicial membership organization in the country and a leading provider of judicial education. The NCJFCJ believes judges are the leaders of the juvenile and family court system, and by engaging all stakeholders, better decisions are made with improved outcomes for children, families, and victims of domestic violence. I am so proud that they have made Reno, NV, their home.

The NCJFCJ brings together a broad constituency of judicial officers, attorneys, advocates, court administrators, clerks of court, probation officers, child welfare professionals, and others with a common goal of ensuring the most effective juvenile and family court system. It addresses a wide range of complex issues impacting the well-being of children and families that encompass juvenile delinquency, domestic child sex trafficking, child abuse and neglect, child custody and visitation, substance abuse, domestic violence, trauma, mental health, and military issues. The NCJFCJ also leads development and implementation of policies and practices to ensure fair, equal,

effective, and timely justice for children, families, and victims of domestic violence.

For eight decades, the NCJFCJ has been known for the exemplary quality of its services, including advanced education, training, publications, technical assistance, research, data and statistics, and policy development to promote justice for children and families. Inspired by the leadership, experience, expertise, dedication, and passion of its members, the NCJFCJ is committed to another 80 years of efforts to meet the ever-evolving needs of our most vulnerable population: the children and families who seek justice.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and honoring the 80 years of achievements and tireless efforts of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, its members and staff, past and present, to ensure a timely, fair, and coordinated justice system for children and families and safer communities across the country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JOE KALIKO

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish to thank and commend Joe Kaliko for his extraordinarily valuable commitment and service in aiding and advocating for our most vulnerable throughout the community. His many deeds of generosity and caring have made him a go-to person when people need help. His life is a real inspiration for all of us.

Joe Kaliko is founder of the Needs Clearinghouse, a private nonprofit organization. He has actively partnered with governmental agencies, in helping provide necessary—sometimes life-saving—resources to people through programs such as Hug a Hound and the Refugee Assistance Project. He has helped raise funds and contributions to a myriad of charitable causes, touching many, many lives. I have seen those people and the powerfully positive effects on their lives, disabled people who now have ramps for access to their homes, veterans who now have housing, ill people who now have better healthcare, and numerous others.

Joe Kaliko is all about making a difference. He is a true hero.●

RECOGNIZING THE HAVRE YOUTH BASEBALL ALL-STAR TEAM

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the distinct honor of recognizing the Havre youth baseball, 10U, All-Star team. This past weekend, the team from Havre won the Montana Cal Ripken Baseball State title for the 10 years old and under division.

Despite a loss to Belgrade in their opening game of the tournament, the Havre All-Stars battled their way to the championship game, and defeated Bozeman to claim the title. In addition to an outstanding performance on the