

globe. In 2016, PEPFAR supported more than 11 million people with lifesaving antiretroviral treatment and provided testing and counseling for more than 74 million people.

During the committee markup of the Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, I offered an amendment that would have increased PEPFAR by \$500 million. Funding for PEPFAR has been stagnant for several years, and the additional funds in my amendment would have enabled millions more people infected with the AIDS virus to receive lifesaving treatment. Regrettably, my amendment failed on a party-line vote.

Nonetheless, the bill still succeeds in rejecting the administration's nonsensical and unacceptable reduction to HIV/AIDS funding. I want to be sure that all Senators are aware of this critical funding, which has received widespread, bipartisan support for many years.

CHOLERA IN HAITI

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in 2004 the United States voted to establish the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, MINUSTAH, to police the country following years of political turmoil.

While MINUSTAH was successful in bringing a semblance of order to the country, its mission was severely impacted by the 2010 earthquake which resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people and left hundreds of thousands more in need of assistance. Haiti has not fully recovered since then.

Unfortunately, that was not the only tragedy that befell Haiti in 2010. In October of that year, a cholera outbreak spread throughout the country, sickening hundreds of thousands and claiming the lives of more than 9,000. Even more tragically and unlike the earthquake, the outbreak could have been prevented, and the UN peacekeeping mission—tasked with protecting the people—was at fault.

The cholera outbreak was caused by an act of extreme negligence, when some UN peacekeepers disposed of human waste in a manner that contaminated the local water system. Before it happened, cholera was not a problem in Haiti. Today it is. In 2016, after years of refusing to accept responsibility, the UN acknowledged its role in the cholera outbreak and established a trust fund to address the problem, but so far, very little has been contributed.

A provision I authored, which was adopted unanimously by the Senate Appropriations Committee and included in the fiscal year 2018 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, would provide the Trump administration with the authority to enable the United States to do its part to help.

With MINUSTAH winding down in Haiti, \$40 million in unused contribu-

tions are available to donor countries, and the UN has agreed that those credits may be used to help address the cholera problem caused by its own peacekeepers.

The United States share of those credits is \$11.7 million, and the provision I mentioned makes clear that the committee believes contributing to the trust fund would be an appropriate use of those funds. While this amount still falls far short of what is needed, if we believe in accountability for the UN, we should join other nations in providing our share of these funds to address this tragedy.

This is not a tragedy that only harmed a few families. Nearly 10,000 innocent people lost their lives through no fault of their own. They need help, and this is a small way for us to contribute.

When the United States responds to natural or manmade disasters, whether the tsunami in Indonesia, earthquakes in Nepal, drought in Africa, or war in Syria, we don't debate whose responsibility it should be to care for the victims. We respond because we are able to, and that is what global leaders do when tragedy strikes. We did not cause the cholera outbreak in Haiti any more than we have caused countless other calamities around the world, but we can help. Even \$11.7 million will make a difference in Haiti, including by leveraging contributions from other governments.

I hope other Senators will follow the lead of the Appropriations Committee and lend their voices in support of this effort.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NYUMBANI CHILDREN'S HOME

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its founding, I would like to share a few remarks about the Nyumbani Children's Home.

Marcelle and I have always enjoyed learning about and celebrating the continued growth and successes of Nyumbani. Those successes are because of the people who choose to dedicate their time, valuable skills, and scarce resources to a noble cause—that of saving and improving the lives of others.

We have been particularly touched and moved by the stories of the children of Nyumbani. Despite confronting tremendous personal medical and social challenges, these young people have been nurtured, nourished, educated, and cared for in a safe and loving environment.

These children have also benefited from advances in medical and therapeutic care that were unimaginable when this refuge was founded on September 8, 1992. To know that many of the children raised there have now grown into magnificent young people is a testament to the mission of this center.

When the Nyumbani Children's home was founded, there was certainly no as-

surance that these results would necessarily follow. The inspired efforts of our friend, Father Angelo D'Agostino, or Father D'Ag, have led to these successes. Father D'Ag was a man of faith who combined an incredible work ethic with vision and an insatiable, indomitable will. He was a man whose friendship I cherished.

Father D'Ag realized that the terror, stigma, and uncertainties associated with the transmission of the AIDS virus was responsible for a generation of orphans. Cruelly, AIDS also denied these children a home because Kenyan orphanages would turn them away out of fear and an inability to provide appropriate medical care, but Father D'Ag would not walk away.

It began when Father D'Ag took on the care of three children who had been abandoned and were destined to die alone. From that modest beginning, the Nyumbani Children's Home became a forerunner in providing care to those affected by the scourge of HIV.

In the decades since, Father D'Ag's vision has grown to encompass not only the original Children's Home, but also an advanced diagnostic laboratory, the unique Nyumbani Village, and an indispensable community outreach program that provides medical care to residents of distressed communities in Nairobi.

As a doctor and Jesuit priest, Father D'Ag innately understood the principle that every life has value and dignity. His character and his knowledge compelled him to act when others stood paralyzed by fear and doubt.

Sharing his compassion and conviction from the outset was Sister Mary Owens, Nyumbani's remarkable executive director since Father D'Ag's passing in 2006. Each of us is enormously thankful for the work of extraordinary people like Father D'Ag and Sister Mary. We are grateful for the many lives that have been saved and all that has been accomplished by Nyumbani over the past 25 years and look forward to success stories in the next 25 years.

Nyumbani is a representation of what good can come when dedicated people cast aside fear and doubt, bring forward the true human spirit, and help those in need.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for today's vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of William Emanuel to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board. I would have voted nay.●

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall

vote No. 200, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Noel J. Francisco, of the District of Columbia, to be Solicitor General of the United States. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 201, on the nomination of Noel J. Francisco, of the District of Columbia, to be Solicitor General of the United States. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent for rollcall vote No. 202, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of William J. Emanuel, of California, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, September 18, 2017, was the 70th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force. Since its inception, it has repeatedly proven that it is indeed the finest air force in the world.

Among the greatest strengths of the U.S. Air Force is its enlisted corps, which is recognized worldwide as being comprised of the best educated, best trained, best motivated, and most dedicated men and women of any air force anywhere.

The office of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force was created in 1967 based in large measure on strong advocacy by the Air Force Association and has been filled by 18 brilliant leaders, including the present Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Kaelth O. Wright.

The U.S. Air Force core values of “Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do” are embodied in the office of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, in the Air Force enlisted corps, and in all men and women serving in the U.S. Air Force.

The Senate Air Force Caucus joins the Air Force Association and airmen worldwide in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Office of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL BARRY GASDEK

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to honor retired LTC Barry Gasdek of Laramie, WY, for his decades of past and present service to our country, the sacrifices he has made, and to commemorate his recent naming as commander of Region III of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

A man of distinction, heroism, and continuous achievement, Mr. Gasdek is a supremely decorated veteran, having been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, five Bronze Stars, the Soldier’s Medal, 17 Air Medals, and two Purple Hearts, among

other awards. Mr. Gasdek earned these Purple Hearts during his service in Vietnam for wounds he sustained under heavy enemy fire and explosives. It was once said by his commander that Mr. Gasdek was a “magnet” for enemy fire, but this didn’t stop him from charging forward to protect his men and give them the leadership they needed when they found themselves right in the thick of it.

It is clear to anyone who knows Mr. Gasdek that he is an outstanding American veteran, and his valor has not gone unnoticed. I congratulate Mr. Gasdek for his achievement with the Military Order of the Purple Heart and wish him the very best with his continued work helping Wyoming veterans in need.

Thank you.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SABRINA LIANG

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Sabrina for her hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Sabrina is a native of California. She currently attends Wellesley College, where she is studying political science. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Sabrina for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.●

TRIBUTE TO TYLER SMITH

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Tyler Smith for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Tyler is a native of Illinois. He is a graduate of Indiana University, where he studied public affairs. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Tyler for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

TRIBUTE TO ALISON CHEPERDAK

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize the hard work of my Com-

merce, Science, and Transportation committee intern Alison Cheperdak. Alison hails from Hopkinton, MA, and is in her third year at George Washington University Law School.

While interning on the Commerce Committee, Alison assisted the Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security. She is a dedicated worker who was committed to getting the most out of her internship. I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Alison for all of the fine work she did for the committee and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR BRUNK W. CONLEY

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes today to thank my friend Brunk Conley and to honor his long and distinguished career as he retires from the Oregon National Guard.

After more than 35 years of service to the Oregon Guard, the State of Oregon, and the United States—including his most recent position as the 10th Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard—he has certainly earned it.

Brunk, as we call him in Oregon, enlisted in December of 1981 and completed both airborne and ranger schools soon after his basic training. He demonstrated an early talent for leadership, and it wasn’t long before he was being selected for command.

He deployed to Iraq with Oregon’s 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team in 2003 as command sergeant major of the 162nd Infantry’s 2nd Battalion and to Afghanistan in 2006, after being selected as command sergeant major of the 41st.

Between those overseas deployments, he served in New Orleans as part of the relief effort following Hurricane Katrina, helping to provide stability and support to Americans in desperate need of both.

Anybody who knows Brunk knows that he has been tireless in his pursuit of excellence and has served as an example to his colleagues in the Oregon Guard and elsewhere.

During his service in uniform, he earned a Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, and Oregon Distinguished Service Medal.

Now I have always believed in the principle that friends don’t filibuster friends, so I will not read the long list of Brunk’s awards and commendations here, but let me tell you how pleased I was to learn in 2012 that Brunk had been promoted from command sergeant major of the Oregon National Guard to command sergeant major of the entire Army National Guard.

As the most senior enlisted member of the Army National Guard, Brunk made sure Army National Guard leaders took the needs of enlisted guardsmen into account and worked with his Active Duty counterparts to ensure policies made sense from a total Army perspective.