

garment industry inordinately rewarded factory owners and managers, while ignoring factory workers' safety and rights. In the dusty rubble of the building collapse, it became crystal clear that the Bangladeshi Government, factory owners and managers, and the global apparel brands all had a grave responsibility to do more, and quickly, to secure the labor rights of Bangladeshi workers. A simple fact remains, 5 years later: Had the Rana Plaza workers been afforded the ability to organize and protect their interests, the tragedy never would have happened. With collective strength and action, they could have stood up to employers to demand basic rights, and they could have refused to be ordered back into the building without appropriate safety standards. Five years later, it is also clear that a great deal of work remains to secure these rights.

As the son of a seamstress who worked in the textile factories of northern New Jersey, I knew from watching my mother how tiring and strenuous such work could be, but it does not have to be fatal. The United States' own Triangle Shirtwaist Fire more than a hundred years before Rana Plaza, which killed nearly 150 people, galvanized a necessary workers' movement and subsequent necessary reforms that to this day help protect labor rights while ensuring that American companies produce high-quality products. To this day, the AFL-CIO and other American labor unions work tirelessly to expose the conditions facing U.S. workers and to organize collective responses and inform government decisions to promote worker protections. Last year, for example, an AFL-CIO report revealed an alarming rate of workplace deaths among Latinos and immigrants to the United States and provided recommendations to the Department of Labor to address them. Along with many of my Senate colleagues, I am pushing for our government to adopt these recommendations. Put simply, the successes of American organized labor are inextricable from the prosperity of the American economy and have helped to boost the fortunes of countless American workers.

We know that countries and people are more secure and prosperous when workers can operate in safety while pursuing economic success. The proud legacy of the movement for American workers' rights demands that we advocate for workers at risk around the globe. In the past 5 years since the Rana Plaza disaster, we have so advocated. We have come together in unprecedented ways to address the factors driving labor abuses against workers in Bangladesh.

As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee at the time of the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013, my first hearing explored the tragedy and the consequences of a race to the bottom that had increased companies' profit margins alongside risks to their workers. This was the first SFRC hearing fo-

cused on labor rights in more than a dozen years. I called another hearing early the following year to review progress in addressing the labor rights emergency in Bangladesh and conducted rigorous, bipartisan oversight to ensure that the U.S. Government was doing all it could to spur change among brands, owners, and Bangladeshi Government officials. This included a field visit and a November 2013 majority staff report that examined progress in advancing workers' safety and labor rights since the Rana Plaza disaster and the Tazreen factory fire. We also worked closely with our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee to ensure that funds over 3 successive fiscal years were designated to directly support the development and capacity-building of truly independent labor unions in Bangladesh that could safely and effectively advocate for worker rights.

Meanwhile, major American retailers who produced apparel in Bangladesh, including Abercrombie & Fitch, American Eagle Outfitters, and Fruit of the Loom, joined the effort alongside other global brands, governments, civil society, and labor unions to grapple with the acute challenges facing Bangladeshi workers who produced their goods. The risk of undermined consumer confidence and declines in brand quality helped spur some corporations to join the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh—a 5-year, legally binding compact to improve safety in Bangladeshi ready-made garment factories through reasonable steps to prevent future disasters. Most importantly, the accord signatories included labor unions, who were rightly regarded as equal and critical stakeholders in effecting needed change. Five years later, accord brands have the opportunity to demonstrate a sustained commitment to worker rights by signing on to the 2018 accord. This iteration strengthens and expands the accord to cover freedom of association. Other groups, such as the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, have also helped to further galvanize American and multinational brands to take greater responsibility for ensuring worker safety in Bangladesh. In any such efforts, workers and their representatives must have a truly equal seat at the table, for without them we cannot make meaningful labor rights reforms.

Governments have a critical role to play as well. Following Rana Plaza, the United States and other governments pressed Bangladesh to take meaningful steps to improve respect for labor rights in the country, including through removing Bangladesh from the generalized system of preferences and conducting regular reviews of the Bangladeshi Government's efforts to better adhere to international labor standards. I believe the U.S. Government can and should do more to ensure that developing countries with which our country trades are taking nec-

essary steps to respect labor and human rights. I was proud last year to introduce the Labor Rights for Development Act with Senator BROWN and the Anti-Trafficking Trade Act with Senator PORTMAN that together would raise the labor and human rights standards countries must meet to gain preferential access to the U.S. market.

Five years on, the progress made in Bangladesh is simply not enough. Factories throughout the country have failed to meet their binding commitments on workplace safety in the accord and the alliance, risking the departure of some global retailers to other markets. Independent unions in Bangladesh remain constrained and subject to increasing harassment and attacks on labor rights activists, which often occur with impunity. Amidst a growing climate of political tensions in Bangladesh, the government too often views independent labor unions as opposition dissenters to punish, rather than key partners that are vital to the country's growth and prosperity.

In the 5 years since Rana Plaza, I have continued to believe that what happens in Bangladesh to improve labor rights and workers' safety can have a dramatic ripple effect on the global apparel industry and that real change in working conditions there can help to change conditions for workers everywhere in a race to the top, but similarly, if not enough happens in Bangladesh, it sends the message that workers' lives can still be systematically undervalued and that working to advance labor rights is an endeavor not worth the risk. That is the wrong message, and on this anniversary, we must recommit ourselves to pushing stakeholders in Bangladesh—whether government, brands, or owners—to continue a path of reform. To do any less harms not just the workers, but also Bangladesh's economic potential, because no one will want to wear clothes stained with the blood of workers.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING JAMES DODD "JIM" MANASCO

• Mr. JONES. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of Jim Manasco, who passed away at his home on Smith Lake in Alabama on April 12, 2018.

Jim was a self-taught artist and sign painter who entered the trade as an apprentice when he was just 16 years old. He was a successful commercial artist for 65 years and possessed the rare ability to letter and paint freehand. He was also a gifted creative artist in multiple mediums, from carving to pottery to painting.

In the early 1970s, Jim, his wife, Ruth, and a small group of naturalists were leaders in the fight to preserve and protect the land along the Sipsey fork of the Black Warrior River in northwest Alabama. Because of his

dedication, Jim was chosen to testify before Congress in support of the Eastern Wilderness Act, which was signed into law in 1975, and the Sipsey Wilderness, in the Bankhead National Forest, became the first wilderness designated in the act. Thanks to Jim and that determined group, generations to come will continue to enjoy pristine, undeveloped lands east of the Mississippi River. Since passage of the act, more than 140 Wilderness Areas and nearly 1.5 million acres have been protected in the eastern United States.

Like FDR, who, following in the footsteps of his “uncle” Teddy Roosevelt, left a great conservation legacy, Jim saw “an America whose rivers and valleys and lakes—hills and streams and plains—the mountains over our land and nature’s wealth deep under the earth—are protected as the rightful heritage of all the people.” Thanks to men like Jim Manasco, more than half of the people who live in Alabama enjoy outdoor recreation every year in the most biologically diverse State east of the Mississippi River and one of the most biologically diverse States in the entire country. Alabama boasts forests, woodlands, wetlands, caves, glades, beaches, and prairies, not to mention more than 4,500 documented species.

The importance of protecting and wisely managing this natural wealth cannot be overstated. In Alabama, outdoor recreation generates 135,000 direct jobs—that is more than twice the number of auto manufacturing jobs—it generates \$3.9 billion in wages and salaries and \$857 million in State and local taxes.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Jim Manasco’s other important legacy, that of Cherokee wisdomkeeper. The Cherokee played a significant role in the history of Alabama, and many Alabamians proudly claim Cherokee ancestry. Jim was long honored as a Tribal elder for his teachings about carvings on beech trees, native symbols, ceremonial knowledge, and Tribal history and for his intimate knowledge of the plants and animals that inhabit the landscape of the South. Some of this wisdom was captured in his popular book, “Walking Sipsey,” published in 1992.

Jim always downplayed his accomplishments, often saying, “Raw talent’s got nothing over dogged determination.” Well, Jim Manasco was right, and America needs more men with dogged determination to do the right thing. I hope to be one of them.●

#### TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDRA ABRAHAMS

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Alexandra Abrahams, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Alexandra is a student at the University of Central Florida, where she ma-

jors in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRADLEY ALDRIDGE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Bradley Aldridge, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Bradley Aldridge is a student at the University of Central Florida, where he majors in political science. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO SAMANTHA BROWN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Samantha Brown, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Samantha is a student at the University of Central Florida, where she majors in political science and criminal justice with a minor in legal studies. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO FARAH FOUAD

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Farah Fouad, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Farah is a graduate of Palm Beach Atlantic University, where she majored in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO JOHN PAUL GILLIAN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize John Paul Gillian, a 2017 spring intern in my Jacksonville, FL, office, for all of the hard work he has

done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

John Paul is a student at the University of North Florida, where he is pursuing his masters of science in management. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO PETER GILLIAN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Peter Gillian, a 2017 spring intern in my Jacksonville, FL, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Peter is a student at the University of North Florida, where he is majoring in accounting. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO KYLER GRAY

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Kyler Gray, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Kyler is a student at the University of Central Florida, where he majors in public administration. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO NATALIE HELLMANN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Natalie Hellmann, a fall intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Natalie is a student at the Rollins College, where she majors in business administration. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO ETHAN HULLIHAN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Ethan Hulihan, a spring intern in my Orlando, FL, office, for all