

Commissioner Velasquez is an experienced, courageous jurist with integrity. That is why he was hired for the job, and by all indications, he is guilty of nothing more than doing the job he was hired to do. The more he does so, the more those who fear prosecution will try to find ways to stop him. It is therefore very important at this time that the international community, including the United States, reaffirms its support for Velasquez and the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala.

It is noteworthy that the former attorney general has consistently voiced her support for Velasquez because, if anyone should know if there is a grain of truth to the allegations against him, it would be her. She knows from experience the motivations of those who are aligned against CICIG because they have also tried to intimidate her.

In order for CICIG and Commissioner Velasquez to effectively carry out CICIG's mandate through the reminder of its current term that ends in September 2019, he needs the support of the Guatemalan Government, the United Nations, the United States, and other governments that support justice in Guatemala. I commend the Department of State and U.S. Ambassador Arreaga for recognizing what is at stake and for seeking ways to ensure that CICIG and Commissioner Velasquez can carry out their responsibilities transparently and effectively. I also know that a majority of Democrats and Republicans respect Commissioner Velasquez and want CICIG to receive the funds it needs. I am confident that the funds will be released, that CICIG and the role of the Commissioner will be enhanced, and that the cause of justice for the Guatemalan people will be served.

NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I intend to object to any unanimous consent request relating to the nomination of William R. Evanina, to be Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, PN1548.

During the course of the Judiciary Committee's inquiry into how the Justice Department and FBI handled the Clinton and Russia investigations, committee staff have reviewed text messages between Peter Strzok and Lisa Page. In some of the text messages, an individual named "Evanina" is mentioned in the context of government officials having briefed then Vice President-Elect Pence on national security related issues and planning to brief him a second time. The name was redacted from text messages initially provided to Congress.

"Evanina" most likely refers to the nominee who is and was at that time Acting Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center. The committee needs to more fully understand the meaning of the apparent references to Mr. Evanina in the

Strzok-Page texts and will need to obtain further context from him and the Justice Department in order to do so before I could consent to proceeding to consider his confirmation.

The committee has recently experienced increasing difficulty in obtaining relevant documents and briefings from the Justice Department and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, ODNI. For example, Deputy Attorney General, DAG, Rod Rosenstein personally assured me that the Senate Judiciary Committee would receive equal access to information provided to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, HPSCI, with regard to any concessions in its negotiations regarding pending subpoenas from that committee. Two weeks ago, the ODNI and the DAG provided a briefing in connection with a pending HPSCI subpoena to which no Senate Judiciary Committee member was invited. Thus far, the committee's attempts to schedule an equivalent briefing have been ignored.

Additionally, beginning November 29, 2017, I made requests for information from the inspector general of the Intelligence Community and ODNI regarding the diffusion of the IC whistleblower program and the highly unusual and problematic termination of the IC IG's former Executive Director for Whistleblowing and Source Protection. In March, having received none of the information I asked for, I formally and publicly objected to the confirmation of the ODNI general counsel nominee. To date, I still have received nothing. Therefore, I also object to Mr. Evanina's confirmation until and unless the ODNI provides a fulsome response to my letters. Additionally, I understand that Mr. Evanina was responsible for developing policies and procedures to address retaliatory security clearance actions pursuant to a statutory directive, but that it is not clear whether such policies and procedures have been implemented. I would like for Mr. Evanina to explain the status of those efforts.

Thus, unfortunately, I must object to any consideration of this nomination. My objection is not intended to question the credentials of Mr. Evanina in any way. However, the executive branch must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner.

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Republic of Azerbaijan, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of its declaration of independence on May 28.

The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. The country faced horrific challenges when it was invaded by the Bolsheviks in 1920 and later incorporated into the Soviet Union. With the end of the Cold War

and the demise of the USSR, Azerbaijan once again achieved its independence on August 30, 1991. Our country recognized Azerbaijan's independence that same year and established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan on February 19, 1992.

Azerbaijan is a key security partner of the United States. For example, Azerbaijani troops have served in Afghanistan since 2002 to assist the United States and our partners in NATO. Additionally, the country supports the United States through the Northern Distribution Network, which allows for the transit of nonlethal supplies through Azerbaijan's territory to our forces in Afghanistan and permits the overflight through its airspace of U.S. military personnel heading to Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan also stands as an example of a secular, Muslim-majority country that has excellent relations with its own Jewish community and has maintained diplomatic relations with our strong ally, Israel, for over 25 years.

Through the Southern Gas Corridor, Azerbaijan will provide energy to our allies in Europe, thus lessening the continent's reliance on Russia for gas.

For this and many other reasons, I commend the Republic of Azerbaijan and its people on this significant anniversary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BICENTENNIAL OF MADISON, NORTH CAROLINA

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate with the citizens of Madison, NC, the town's 200 years of rich history. Named for President James Madison, the town was acquired at auction in June 1818.

In Madison's infancy, tobacco was a high-demand commodity and employer in town due to its location on the Dan and Mayor Rivers, which offer fertile soil for cultivation. By the late 1800s, Madison was home to more than 40 tobacco factories, I reported to have been the largest grower of tobacco in the world at that time. In the early 1900s, Madison reaped the benefits of a growth in the textiles industry when Gem Dandy, Inc., opened for business in town. It remains headquartered there today. Madison gained another employer in the mid-1990s when Remington Arms made Madison home to its headquarters.

Today Madison boasts two historic districts and several landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

I am proud to offer my congratulations to the citizens of Madison, NC on the occasion of their bicentennial. •

REMEMBERING KATE KENNEDY

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Kate Kennedy, a pioneering and inspiring San Franciscan.

Kate Kennedy was born in County Meath, Ireland, in 1827, the second of seven children. After her father's death in 1841, she cared for her five younger sisters, even overseeing their education at home. During Ireland's Great Famine, Kate immigrated to the United States. She worked as a seamstress in New York before moving with the rest of her family to California in 1856.

Shortly after arriving in California, she began teaching in San Francisco's public schools. She rose to become the principal of the North Cosmopolitan Grammar School, but was only paid the salary of a primary school principal because she was a woman. In response to this injustice, she began a campaign for equal pay all school teachers. Her efforts were rewarded in 1874, when the California Legislature passed a law requiring female public school teachers paid the same as male counterparts.

Following her landmark victory, Kate continued to teach while advocating for other social issues like labor and tax reforms. She eventually ran for state superintendent of public instruction, becoming the first woman to run for Statewide office in California.

Although she didn't win, she continued to leave a mark on her adopted State. After being transferred for political reasons to a smaller school with a lower salary, Kate fought the demotion and was ultimately fired in retaliation by the schoolboard. She sued the board, taking her case all the way to the California Supreme Court. The court sided with Kate, delivering an opinion that still serves today as the foundation of teacher tenure in California.

Shortly after the court's ruling, Kate Kennedy passed away in Oakland, CA, and was buried in San Francisco's Laurel Hill Cemetery in 1890.

Kate Kennedy's commitment to justice and willingness to fight for her rights is truly inspirational. As the first woman to represent California in the U.S. Senate, I am proud to honor her legacy and the historic role she played in the ongoing struggle for equality.●

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES T. JONES

● Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 100th birthday of Charles T. Jones, or better known to the people who love him as Captain Charlie, a proud West Virginian, military veteran, legendary businessman, servant of the community, and a dear friend. Throughout his century of life, Charlie has often been referred to as a coal miner, farmer, riverboat captain, and a Renaissance man.

While he grew up on the banks of the Kanawha River in West Virginia, Charlie attended school in New Jersey, where he spent many afternoons rowing on Lake Carnegie. This is where he met Albert Einstein, who would observe his rowing each afternoon. He would later earn a degree in business from Babson Institute in Massachusetts.

Charlie served his country in the U.S. Navy during World War II with the Navy Seabees in Guadalcanal and on a mine sweeper as an engineering officer off the coasts of Japan and the Philippines. The sense of service and duty he demonstrated while in the military is still something he carries with him to this day.

After the war's end, Charlie went to work for his family's coking coal business, Star Coal and Coke Company, which later became Amherst Coal Company, in 1946. The company was started by his grandfather in 1893. Due to the downturn in production and demand of coking coal, out of necessity, the company ventured into river transportation. In 1951, the family bought the Hatfield-Campbell Creek Coal Company, a business that operated steamboats, barges, and river terminals along the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. He took over the river operations of the company and renamed them "Amherst Barge Co." Along the way, the company became Madison Coal and Supply Co. and is now known as Amherst Madison and still specializes in marine services, like towing, construction, shipping, and equipment repairs. Amherst and its affiliated companies have proudly employed thousands of West Virginians over the past 70 years.

Charlie is one of the most hard-working, humble, and giving people West Virginia has ever known. He is a long-time supporter of many business and charitable and community organizations throughout the Kanawha Valley. Over the years, he has served or currently serves on numerous boards and committees including Yeager Airport Authority Board, board of trustees for the University of Charleston, chairman emeritus of the Inland Waterways User Board, trustee emeritus of the WV Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, director emeritus of the Mariner's Museum, past chairman of the WV Mining and Reclamation Association, former director of the Charleston Area Medical Center Foundation, One Valley Bancorp, and the Western Pocahontas Corporation, Ohio Valley Improvement Association or DINAMO, and so many more.

His lifelong contributions have not been overlooked. Just last year, Charlie was honored as a Distinguished West Virginian by the Governor, entered into the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels by the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and inducted into West Virginia University College of Business and Economics' Business Hall of Fame, and recognized as a West Virginia "Who's Who" by the State Journal. Additionally, he has received previous honors such as the Charleston YMCA's Spirit of the Valley Award, induction into the Coal Mining Hall of Fame, Charleston Gazette-Mail's West Virginian of the Year, Seamen's Church Institute Lifetime Achievement Award, and the National Rivers Hall of Fame Achievement Award, to name only a few.

He credits his longevity to good genes, good luck, and a great wife and very supportive family, associates, and friends. Charlie and his wife, Mary Ellen, have been married for more than 45 years. He has four children: Laura Jones Pray, C. Tandy Jones, Jennifer Jones, and the late O. Nelson Jones. He is a member of the Oak Hill Baptist Church and the St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Charleston.

I know I speak for all West Virginians when I wish Charles T. "Captain Charlie" Jones a Happy 100th birthday and wish for many more.●

RECOGNIZING SILVER CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

● Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to celebrate the dedication of Silver Creek Middle School, SCMS, in Kensington, MD as it completes its inaugural year. SCMS opened on September 5, 2017, for 550 students in sixth and seventh grade.

Students from Chevy Chase Elementary, North Chevy Chase Elementary, and Rock Creek Forest Elementary now attend SCMS. In recognition of the combination of students from three different elementary schools, SCMS dedicated its inaugural year to community building and has worked hard to create a strong sense of unity and common purpose.

Before the 2017-18 school year began, SCMS organized three community summer socials at parents' residences. More than 200 parents participated in these events and helped cultivate a supportive network before their students had even arrived at school. In addition, SCMS students and parents have organized two cleanups of nearby Silver Creek, for which the school is named. Students, teachers, and parents collaborated in these efforts to protect our environment.

In addition to community building, SCMS focuses on a global and holistic education. SCMS is an International Baccalaureate, IB, school with a Middle Years Programme. This program allows students to engage across cultures and subject areas to develop their self-understanding and a sense of their relationships to others and our society.

I am proud that Silver Creek Middle School is committed to a quality education and a collaborative educational environment for all of its students. I commend the dedicated faculty and staff at SCMS for all they do to help each of their students achieve his or her full potential. The Silver Creek Middle School community has my best wishes for a productive learning experience for many years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Cuccia, one of his secretaries.