

TRIBUTE TO MARIE RADER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, for two decades, Representative Marie Rader from McKee was a powerful voice for her constituents in Kentucky's House of Representatives. It is my privilege today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and a dear friend who retired from her legislative career at the end of last year.

A graduate of Berea College in Madison County, Marie was a passionate advocate for the causes important to Kentuckians, and she spent her career helping guide the public policies of our State. As the chair of house transportation committee, she proved her leadership for Kentucky and was a strong supporter of our Commonwealth's infrastructure. Her work to encourage economic development provided a wonderful service to Marie's constituents and to families throughout our State.

Even after her retirement from the general assembly last year, Marie has continued to remain active in the Jackson County community. She serves as the executive director of the public housing authority and employs her many talents with the Jackson County Development Association and the Jackson County Industrial Authority. Earlier this year, she helped organize a Memorial Day event to honor the service and sacrifice of local Vietnam veterans. The community gathered to celebrate more than 100 brave Kentuckians, and Marie was crucial to making the event a success. Her selfless work for the residents of Jackson County and the Commonwealth continues to inspire others.

When the Kentucky State House came into session at the beginning of this year, its members recognized the absence of their former colleague with gratitude and respect. Representative Robert Goforth, Marie's successor, sponsored a resolution honoring her lasting impact in that body and throughout Kentucky. It is my privilege today to join with the members of the Kentucky State House in sharing those sentiments and wishing her a wonderful retirement. I urge each of my Senate colleagues to help me honor Marie Rader, a remarkable individual and my friend.

RECOGNIZING THE STUDENTS OF ASHLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today it is my privilege to congratulate the students of Ashland Middle School, in Boyd County, who recently won the national "Solve for Tomorrow" competition for their work to help communities and emergency responders address our Nation's opioid epidemic. This prestigious award, presented live on national television, comes after months of hard work, collaboration, and a drive to help their community face this pressing issue.

The competition, which promotes science, technology, engineering, art,

and math—STEAM—disciplines, challenges students to identify an important cause and to create change in their school. After speaking with Ashland Middle School's public resource officer, these bright innovators chose to develop a technological solution to help first responders safely collect hazardous needles discarded by drug users, which often carry and can transmit dangerous diseases. Employing a 3-D printer and working through multiple prototypes, the students created a hollow, molded plastic box, which can allow first responders to pick up the needles without putting themselves in danger.

As a prize for their innovation, these students won \$150,000 of technology for their school. They also won a trip to our Nation's Capital, where I had the privilege to meet with them and personally congratulate them on their successes.

Our Nation is gripped by a worsening opioid crisis, and we all have a responsibility to help keep our communities safe. These young students are using their creativity and technological ingenuity to do just that. I join with the entire Ashland community in congratulating the following inspirational students: Caleb Campbell, James Campbell, Aubree Hay, Eric Billups, Connor Calhoun, Ethan Goodrich, Liam Ferguson, Cade Parlato, and Shaela Taylor. I would also like to express my gratitude to their advisers who provided guidance throughout this process: Michael Polley, Linda Calhoun, William Ferguson, Mark Harmon, and John Leistner.

The Daily Independent in Ashland, KY, recently published an article about these students, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Daily Independent, Apr. 12, 2018]
 ASHLAND WELCOMES WINNING TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS WITH PARADE
 (By Mike James)

The Ashland Middle School students who won tens of thousands of dollars' worth of high-tech equipment for their school capped their triumphant return Thursday with a parade and the acclaim of other students throughout the district.

The students, whose first-prize winnings included \$150,000 worth of hardware and software for their school courtesy of competition sponsor Samsung Inc., also learned they'd won the community choice portion of the competition, which brings another \$20,000 worth of technology to the school.

And a corporate representative told the students after the parade each of them would receive a computer tablet of their own.

The parade, organized on the day after Samsung made the Big Reveal Wednesday on national TV, took the students in a bus escorted by police and firefighters past each school in the district, where students turned out with banners and applause.

The students, members of the Student Technology Leadership Program and a 3D design and modeling class, were among three first-prize winners in the Samsung Solve for

Tomorrow competition, which challenges teams from middle schools around the country to identify and find solutions for community problems.

The Ashland students invented and built prototypes of a device police and emergency workers can use to pick up potentially dangerous hypodermic syringes, and developed a website and database of information about discarded hypodermics first responders and the public can use.

The community choice award was based on social media voting. Ashland supporters took the AMS team to an early lead in Facebook votes, a lead it maintained throughout the competition.

Samsung representatives made the snap decision to fly to Ashland for the parade after seeing the community support, said corporate citizenship director Ann Woo. "We saw the power of your community in the voting . . . when we heard they'd organized a parade for you, we thought what better place to announce the community support award," she said.

"We wanted to see the community that rallied behind you all year . . . we wanted to see that and thank them," she said.

The parade was a fitting celebration because the competition was a community project, said Mike Polley, who teaches the 3D design and modeling class. The community gets behind sports; why should this be different . . . the community got behind them when they saw the drive and the compassion and the commitment of the kids.

"I hope it's a ripple effect and more and more kids want to have that kind of drive."

HINTON MILLS CENTENNIAL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we continue to discuss the farm bill, I would like to take a moment to congratulate a prominent member of the agricultural community in north-eastern Kentucky. Hinton Mills in Fleming County is a family-owned and operated business celebrating 100 years of serving farm communities in our State.

Founded in 1918 by Frank L. Hinton in Goddard, KY, Hinton Mills began as a small general store for the rural community and was the first retailer in the area to recognize the need for a one-stop, full-service farm supply store. Since its doors opened, it has grown and transformed into a major feed supplier in the area. Under the family's constant care, Hinton Mills continued to expand and today has five locations in three counties. They also make deliveries to farm families in Kentucky and Ohio, providing important services to communities throughout the region.

Today, the family business is led by Bud Hinton of the third generation. As the president and CEO, Bud has reaffirmed Hinton Mills' commitment to the many small towns and rural communities it serves.

Continuing the tradition in the family, Bud's three sons joined the business and are currently vice presidents. Representing the fourth generation, Matt, Adam, and Nathan were all raised in Fleming County, and each of them brings unique skills and experiences to Hinton Mills. They are helping Frank Hinton's business and legacy

continue to thrive. For example, Matt brings a manufacturing background and has received his MBA. In 2015, Adam became Kentucky's first graduate of the American Farm Bureau Federation's Partners in Agricultural Leadership program, which is a national training program for advocates of agriculture. Nathan joined the family business directly out of college, earning a wealth of institutional knowledge. Their new perspectives help Hinton Mills embrace innovation as a way to better serve its customers, but they also maintain the bedrock traditions on which the company was built.

During its centennial celebration, Hinton Mills will showcase both its history and its potential for the future. Hosting 2 days of events, the family has invited members of the community to join them at their Plummers Landing location to visit exhibitions commemorating their company's history, while enjoying kids' games and even a cane pole fishing tournament. On the second day, they will host a tractor parade and a 1918-themed fair to reflect on how far they have come and to signal hope for their future. To top it off, the night will conclude with a fireworks spectacle. I think these festivities are a perfect way to mark 100 years of serving Kentucky farm communities.

I am honored to call the Hinton family my friends, and I admire their remarkable success in Kentucky. Our home State has a rich heritage of agriculture, and family-owned businesses like Hinton Mills are a great example of that tradition. It is my pleasure to congratulate the Hinton family on their many successes and to express my gratitude for all they do for Kentucky's farm communities. As they celebrate their centennial, I would like to wish them all the best, and I urge my Senate colleagues to join me.

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate is now considering legislation to fund the Departments of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education for the coming fiscal year.

Both bills have been supported by broad bipartisan majorities. The Defense and Labor-HHS appropriations subcommittees are the largest of the committee's 12 subcommittees, with 19 members each, almost one-fifth of the Senate.

Despite the diversity of views on our committee, each was reported out of subcommittee and committee with strong bipartisan support.

As my colleagues know, these are the two biggest appropriations bills, which together comprise almost two-thirds of Federal discretionary spending.

I note that the last time the Labor-HHS appropriations bill was on the

Senate floor was more than a decade ago, so it is an especially welcome development that we are debating this bill here today.

It is a testament to the work we have been able to do to push aside the partisanship and reject President Trump's budget requests and poison pill riders, and I am hopeful that this will continue.

I would like to congratulate Chairman SHELBY and Vice Chairman LEAHY, as well as Senator BLUNT, for their commitment to working in a bipartisan fashion to restore regular order to the appropriations process.

This isn't the bill I would have written on my own, and it is not the bill Senator BLUNT—or any other member of the committee—would have written on their own, but it is a good bipartisan compromise, and it would help so many workers, children, students, families, and communities if enacted.

Overall, we rejected the President's push for massive cuts to investments we know are so important, in education, public health, research, and workforce training, to programs that affect workers, seniors, students, women, and so much more.

I am particularly proud that Democrats and Republicans stood together to roundly reject Secretary DeVos's budget requests, from her attempts to privatize and voucherize public schools, to her massive cuts to education funding that would have hurt so many students.

Earlier this year, we reviewed this harmful budget just as we saw teachers and parents around the country organizing and standing up for public education after years of budgets for education not keeping up with needs—because our kids shouldn't be forced to learn in crumbling classrooms with shabby textbooks and our teachers should be paid fairly for the important work they do.

Secretary DeVos wasn't listening to these parents and teachers, and her budget calls for more cuts.

It would eliminate afterschool programs for almost 2 million students, need-based financial aid that helps make college more affordable for millions of students, options for repayment and student loan forgiveness for millions of borrowers and their families, and grants that can be used to keep students safe and healthy through school-based mental health services.

Despite proposing a discretionary budget that would cut \$7.7 billion in Federal investments in education, the request includes \$1 billion for programs aligned with Secretary DeVos's personal privatization agenda, but are not authorized by the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act.

By contrast, the bill we are considering today chooses to invest in public schools and progress for all students, no matter where they live, how they learn, or how much money their parents make.

Our bipartisan bill increases funding for the core Federal elementary and

secondary education program, title I-A grants to school districts, by \$125 million.

This critical program reaches almost 90 percent of school districts and half of all schools. I would have preferred to invest even more, but this is a good step in the right direction, and I am glad we were able to get this done.

Funding for meeting the 40 percent promise under I-D-E-A, our special education law, also goes up by \$125 million. In the most recent fiscal year, Congress provided just 15 percent of special education funding, meaning State and local taxpayers are making up the \$20 billion shortfall. While I would have invested even more, I am glad we were at least able to meet our commitment in this budget and take a good step in the right direction.

Finally, I am glad that I was able to work with Senator BLUNT to include \$93.5 million for meeting the education needs of homeless children and youth.

This increase will help school districts address the barriers homeless children and youth face, and if enacted, this would be the third year in a row of increased funding.

Almost 41,000 public school students were homeless during the 2016–2017 school year in my home State of Washington alone. That is an increase of almost 88 percent since the 2009–2010 school year. That is unacceptable, and this bill would take an important step to help address their needs.

Making college more affordable is another priority in this bill.

We were able to do this by rejecting the administration's proposals to eliminate grant assistance, cut work-study funding, and slash student loan relief that help make college more affordable for millions of college students and borrowers.

The bill also addresses college affordability by increasing the Pell Grant maximum award by \$100, to a new level of \$6,195, for almost 8 million low-income students.

When combined with the \$175 increase in the maximum award included in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus bill, we are sustaining the inflationary increases that had been provided with mandatory funding that expired at the end of fiscal year 2017.

These increases build on the bipartisan reinstatement of the year-round Pell Grant authority that Senator BLUNT and I worked together to include in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill, which allows eligible students to receive up to 150 percent of the maximum award level for additional classes they take during the summer term—it is enabling students to complete their program of study more quickly and with less loan debt—and, in my home State of Washington, has already helped make college more affordable for an estimated 15,000 students.

Finally, I am glad Senator BLUNT and I were able to work together to provide an additional \$8 million for the Department of Education's Office for Civil