

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

Rights, despite Secretary DeVos's attempts to cut funding and erode civil rights protection.

This office addresses title IX enforcement on college campuses, among other important civil rights workloads, and is more important now than ever before.

The bill also continues and builds on the massive and historic investments in childcare and early learning across the country.

It maintains the increase in the Child Care and Development Block Grant that was provided in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus bill, the largest increase in Federal child care spending ever.

States are already starting to increase childcare provider rates, improve quality to comply with the bipartisan CCDBG reauthorization law, improve services for special populations, and address long wait lists. I look forward to seeing the continued progress towards addressing our Nation's childcare crisis.

Our bill also provides an additional \$250 million for Head Start, providing grantees with a cost-of-living adjustment so they can keep up with the cost of inflation and providing additional funds for expanding programs' hours of operation.

Investing in our youngest learners and dedicated early childhood workers is one of the smartest investments we can make.

I consider these investments to be another important step forward and down payment on my Child Care for Working Families Act, which would help make childcare truly affordable, high quality, and accessible to all.

The bill also rejects the President's proposal to eliminate crucial safety net programs. Instead of eliminations, it provides increases for the Community Services Block Grant, which helps fund community action agencies in every county in my home of State of Washington, and for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, an indispensable lifeline for households struggling to pay their energy bills.

Our bill rejects proposed cuts and continues to invest in the title X family planning program, and I am going to keep fighting against this administration's attempts to sabotage this critical source of healthcare for vulnerable women and families.

I am especially pleased that this bill includes significant new resources to address the truly alarming issue of maternal mortality in the United States.

An American woman is three times as likely to die from childbirth as is a woman in Canada and six times as likely to die as a woman in Finland, and this disparity impacts women of color disproportionately.

This is simply unacceptable, so I am very pleased that this bill includes \$50 million at HHS for a new initiative to help understand why mothers are dying as a result of childbirth and pregnancy and prevent this from happening.

We have included \$12 million to expand data collection and surveillance

at State maternal mortality review boards, consistent with a bill that Senators HEITKAMP and CAPITO have been working on to help support these boards, and \$38 million to expand evidence-based programs to prevent maternal mortality and advance maternal health equity.

This is far from the last step we need to take to address this crisis, but it is an important step.

This bill continues the major investments we included in the 2018 omnibus to address the opioid crisis, including over \$3.7 billion to increase access to medication assisted treatment, mental health services, and provider training for substance use disorders, especially focusing on rural area, and an increase of \$50 million for certified community mental health clinics and \$25 million more for the Mental Health Block Grant.

We all know the opioid epidemic is having a tremendous effect on millions of children and families, so this bill continues the fiscal year 2018 investments in child welfare services to help respond to the impacts of substance use on children and families.

It provides additional funds to States to improve plans of safe care to help ensure infants with prenatal substance exposure and their families have access to the treatment they need.

For the fourth year in a row, the bill makes significant new investments in the National Institutes of Health to support researchers' efforts to take full advantage of opportunities to make progress against human disease and disability.

This includes the largest increase to date for Alzheimer's disease research, as well as more than \$500 million to address the opioid addiction epidemic, and increased resources to combat the growing threat posed by antimicrobial resistance.

The bill also includes important investments in high-quality workforce training programs that help workers get good jobs, improve the efficiency of businesses, and grow our economy.

This includes \$3 billion for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State grants to provide support for our national workforce system and help approximately 20 million people each year train for in-demand careers.

The bill includes \$160 million for registered apprenticeship grants, an increase of \$15 million, to expand support for the registered apprenticeship program that the Committees on Appropriations first established dedicated funding for in fiscal year 2016, and reject the President's proposal to create a duplicative nonregistered apprenticeship program that would open the door for any employer, for-profit school, or association to develop a lower-quality program.

This focuses Federal dollars where there is strong evidence and a return on investment rather than on duplicative systems that do not guarantee quality training and provide fewer safeguards for workers and employers.

The bill also includes \$300 million for veterans training programs to help ensure our veterans have the supportive services they need to re-enter the labor force, including job training and placement.

The Department of Labor's other important role is enforcing laws that protect worker health, safety, and rights in the workplace. The bill before us includes modest increases for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Wage and Hour Division for the first time in years.

These are important investments for workers at a time when they need the support. Last year, wage and hour investigations recovered \$270 million in back wages that employers owed their workers, money that is now back in the pockets of more than 240,000 workers across the country.

The bill also rejects the cuts to the Women's Bureau and International Labor Affairs Bureau proposed in the President's budget.

These proposals would have curtailed important work on eliminating the wage gap for women and deficiencies in labor standards implementation in trading partner countries.

The bill rejects the President's proposal to reduce the budget for the National Labor Relations Board, which safeguards workers' ability to organize and collectively negotiate for better pay and working conditions.

Finally, so many of us have been horrified by what we are seeing on the southern border, and many of us are hoping for even more action from this administration to address it right away and without any additional action from Congress.

I was glad we took some action in this bill to restore the cuts President Trump proposed to the Office of Refugee Resettlement and that we took important steps to increase transparency and hold the administration accountable for its policies and actions, including requiring HHS to finally respond to the committee's requests for information on the resources ORR needs to appropriately care for every child in its custody.

In summary, this bill offers a different direction than the one proposed by the administration. It focuses on helping people—on our workers, our students, our children, our families, and our economy. It will help our country compete in the 21st century, and it will help our communities to thrive.

It is a good bill. It helps educate the next generation, protects our workers' rights and prepares them for good-paying jobs, cares for the sick and most vulnerable in society, and supports medical research that will heal the sick and extend life.

I urge all Senators to support this bill and move us rapidly to final passage.

Thank you.●

THE JOHN S. MCCAIN NATIONAL  
DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act of 2019, NDAA, provides crucial resources to our Armed Forces and our national defense. Although I have serious concerns with this law, many of its provisions play a vital role in strengthening our national security.

I championed numerous initiatives in this law that directly benefit the people of Maryland and our nation as a whole. The NDAA increases pay for our brave men and women in uniform by 2.6 percent. It authorizes essential funding for Federal agencies in Maryland, including the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command. It includes resources for important infrastructure projects in Maryland, such as cleanup efforts in Edgewood and Aberdeen Proving Ground and road improvements at Fort Meade. It also ensures that the mission of the Defense Information Systems Agency and those working on it at Fort Meade will continue and protects thousands of jobs from potential loss.

I also support the NDAA's reforms to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States. These reforms, which I debated and supported in the Senate Banking Committee, balance our ability to maintain an open environment for foreign direct investment and to protect our national security. The reforms are essential in responding to foreign nations that strive to gain a strategic advantage over the United States through the acquisition of our advanced technologies.

However, I find several elements of this law detrimental to our national security. For instance, the law eliminates the requirement for congressional authorization for the development of low-yield nuclear weapons. It also authorizes \$65 million in funding for a new low-yield submarine-launched ballistic missile, an unnecessary new weapon that increases the risk of miscalculation and unintended escalation.

In addition, the NDAA authorizes over \$716 billion in defense funding for fiscal year 2019, a \$133 billion increase in the defense budget since President Trump assumed office. I look forward to working with the Defense Department to ensure additional funds are prioritized to improve readiness, enhance training, and focus our procurements on tomorrow's challenges—particularly those in the information space—but this steep expansion in military spending may reduce the Pentagon's incentives to address cost overruns of weapons systems. This dramatic increase in defense spending follows massive tax cuts for the wealthy and proposals from the administration to slash healthcare and other basic needs for middle-class families, which sets a fiscal course that weakens the Nation's long-term prosperity and security.

Furthermore, in his fiscal year 2019 budget request for the Defense Department, President Trump elevated the possibility of great power conflict with China. Secretary of Defense Mattis reiterated this in the 2019 National Defense Strategy, asserting that China was a "revisionist power" and "strategic competitor using predatory economics" to its advantage. Despite this, Republican conferees stripped a bipartisan provision that imposed tough sanctions on ZTE—a Chinese telecommunications company that has stolen U.S. technology, repeatedly violated our laws, and poses an espionage threat. Republicans removed this critical provision at the request of President Trump, who tweeted his intention to provide ZTE with sanctions relief because "Too many jobs in China lost." I remain deeply disappointed that Republican conferees caved to White House pressure and ZTE's lobbying efforts at the expense of the American people and our national security. I will continue to work with like-minded colleagues in the Senate to hold ZTE accountable.

Ultimately, however, the benefits of this law—for our country, for our security, and for the American people—outweigh my concerns; therefore, I voted in support of the fiscal year 2019 NDAA.

#### TRIBUTE TO CHARLES DOWD

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I have the honor of recognizing Charles Dowd of Deer Lodge County, MT for his honorable service in uniform at a pivotal time in our Nation's history and as a leader in his community.

In January of 1941, at the age of 17, Charles volunteered for service at sea in the U.S. Navy. He completed boot camp in Newport, RI, and later communications school in San Diego. In September, as a basically trained radio operator, he was transferred to his first permanent duty station: Pearl Harbor, HI. Three months later, he would take his place in history.

On Sunday morning, December 7, just after completing a night shift, he and his fellow shipmates came under attack by more than 300 enemy aircraft. The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service conducted a successful military strike on the heart of the U.S. Pacific Fleet—destroying or severely damaging 21 ships and claiming the lives of 2,400 Americans. In only a t-shirt and trousers, he sprinted from the barracks to the armory, where he climbed to the roof with a .30-06 Springfield rifle and began firing at the pilots of low-flying torpedo bombers. He suffered burns on his arms and neck from the nearby USS *California*, which was engulfed in flames.

Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Charles volunteered for duty in Solomon Islands during the bloody Guadalcanal campaign, where he earned the nickname "Devil Dog Dowd," harkening to the marines of

Belleau Wood in World War One. Once U.S. forces secured the islands, Dowd would climb a signal tower on the island of Tulagi and message a nearby destroyer that he was willing to exchange duties with any willing radioman. The ship's commodore, CAPT Arleigh Burke, accepted his request. Burke would later reach the rank of four-star admiral and serve as Chief of Naval Operations. In Burke's stateroom, Dowd shared his experiences at Pearl Harbor and Tulagi. Burke was so impressed by Dowd's fighting spirit, that he assigned Dowd as his flag radioman.

During the course of his service, Dowd was awarded seven Bronze Star medals. After the war, Charles and his wife returned stateside, where he worked in masonry and carpentry construction, before completing his degree at the University of Florida. After graduation, he spent the next 18 years passing on his knowledge of industrial arts and drafting to high school students. An avid sportsman with a passion for the outdoors, Dowd later relocated to Anaconda, MT. He has been an active member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, dedicated to preserving the memory of the events of World War II and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Charles continues to speak for civic groups and museums around the State.

It is my privilege to honor the life of this esteemed Montanan, who contributed so much to the preservation of freedom and improving the lives of others. On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to thank Charles, whose courage and selfless dedication to others are a hallmark for generations to come.

#### TRIBUTE TO RICKY RALEY

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Purple Heart recipient Mr. Ricky Raley for his valiant service in the Indiana National Guard Alpha Company, Task Force 1-151. Also known as the Avengers, Task Force 1-151 covered more than 250,000 miles in convoy escorts and were continuously involved in combat operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Ricky served in Iraq from 2007 to 2008 and was stationed near Tikrit at COB Speicher. He served as a lead gun truckdriver for various patrols and security missions. In 2008, Ricky's truck activated an improvised explosive device, leaving Ricky with sustained traumatic brain injuries.

On April 17, 2009, Ricky was involved in a car accident causing paralysis from the waist down. Since then, Ricky has joined the Boot Campaign, a non-profit organization providing life-improving programs for veterans and military families. He also works with the Paralyzed Veterans of America, serving on the board of directors for the Kentucky-Indiana Chapter.

To remain active, Ricky has become a devoted handcyclist, training up to 6 days a week. Currently, Ricky is