

people. Now, Coloradans will be able to grow and manufacture hemp without a cloud of uncertainty hanging over them.

This bill also helps farmers and ranchers hand more opportunities to the next generation. It increases funding for conservation easements and makes it easier for people to secure them.

It invests in America's farm economy to drive innovation in agriculture and to keep up our competitiveness in the 21st century. It doubles funding to help communities in places like my State to deal with forest health, and it protects our watersheds better.

Working with the Presiding Officer, we increased funding for wildlife habitat and provided more opportunities for hunting and fishing on private lands.

We worked with Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas to give rural communities new ways to improve housing and infrastructure.

The bill also provides new resources to help farmers and ranchers adapt to major challenges like climate change. For example, it creates tools for farmers and ranchers to sequester carbon, improve soil health, and become more resilient to drought.

We increased resources in this bill for renewable energy and energy efficiency for rural businesses.

All in all, this 2018 farm bill is an excellent piece of legislation, and a lot of credit lies in the approach we took on the Agriculture Committee. It should be like this for all of our committees. It is a committee on which we don't have partisan differences. If we have differences, we have regional differences, and we work them out. That is why that committee, which I am proud to serve on, is one of the only functioning committees in the Senate. We passed a 5-year farm bill the last time there was a farm bill, not a 6-month one, not a 6-day one, but a 5-year farm bill. This is another one because Republicans and Democrats both know we have to support our farmers and ranchers, not create even more uncertainty for them.

The other privilege of being on that committee is that I spend a lot of time in my State in counties where it is unlikely that I am ever going to win 10 or 20 percent of the vote, but I keep going back and back, not because I think I will win but because I think, as a country, we have to find a way to bring ourselves together and solve problems.

Our farmers and ranchers are a model for that. They are applying their ingenuity to things like climate and drought every single day. They don't have the luxury—and I would say we don't have the luxury—of pretending that politics is the only thing that matters. They are focused on delivering their farms or ranches to the next generations and handing more opportunity, not less, to them. That is all that matters, and that is the ethic we should be applying to our national politics.

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT

Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to call on the Senate to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

The bill extends critical VA benefits to veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals while they served in the waters off Vietnam.

There is no reason the Senate shouldn't pass this. Our country already provides these benefits to veterans who served on land, and it is well past time we extended care to those who served at sea.

This bill is the result of a lot of good bipartisan work in the Senate, and the House has already passed it. To get this across the finish line, we should look to the example our veterans set for how to come together and fight until the job is done.

In Colorado, the United Veterans Committee has advocated strongly for this bill, and veterans from across our State have spoken out on behalf of their colleague veterans who deserve justice with the passage of this bill. Their example reminds us that there is no obstacle we cannot overcome to provide every veteran who has served in the United States of America with the greatest healthcare in the world as a reflection of their service. In this moment, we should rededicate ourselves to that goal by passing this significant bill.

Let me end by thanking Senator GILLIBRAND and the Presiding Officer for their leadership, along with Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER for getting it to this point.

We need to pass this bill in the Senate before we go home. It is the right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO JOE DONNELLY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues in thanking our friend, Senator JOE DONNELLY, for his service to his State and our Nation.

When he was about 30 years old, while he was practicing law in South Bend, JOE DONNELLY sought the Democratic nomination for attorney general in Indiana. Two years later, he ran for State senate. Both times, he lost.

Then he did something truly astonishing: He walked away from politics. For 10 years, he practiced law and ran a small stamp-and-ink business.

In 2003, local party officials asked him to run for Congress. They didn't expect him to win—just be a respectable sacrificial lamb.

He came closer to winning than anyone but he expected.

Two years later, he was elected, in a rematch, to the U.S. House.

As someone who also ran and lost three times before winning an election, I feel a natural camaraderie with my friend from Indiana.

I think I may also have some insight into why he was willing to try one more time.

You see, JOE DONNELLY grew up in New York. He moved to South Bend for college, and he is a Hoosier, through-and-through, but he is also a member of the great White Sox Nation.

In 2005, the Chicago White Sox won the World Series for the first time in 88 years—proof, some would say, that anything is possible if you persevere and work hard.

The next year, it was JOE DONNELLY's turn to score the upset victory by winning election to Congress from a red district in a deep-red State.

In his 6 years in the House, he voted to create the Affordable Care Act.

During the financial crisis of 2009, he voted for the American Recovery Act, to stop America's slide into a second great depression that could have brought down the entire global economy.

When free market hardliners said, "Save Wall Street but let the American auto industry die," Barack Obama said no—and so did JOE.

In November 2012, Hoosier voters sent JOE DONNELLY to the U.S. Senate, the first Democrat to hold his seat since 1977.

In a political era that often seems often to reward snark over substance, JOE DONNELLY is a soft-spoken throwback to an earlier era, when working across the aisle was viewed as a talent, not as treason.

JOE is decent, honest, and direct. You may disagree with him on an issue, but you will never doubt his motives.

His values are classic Hoosier: hard work, common sense, bipartisan compromise, and a disdain for grandstanding.

As a Senator, he has done what he believes is needed to level the playing field for "regular Joes," for farmers and factory workers and, as he says, "the people who go to work in the dark and come home in the dark."

I particularly want to thank him for his work to improve mental health care for military members and veterans. That work will save lives and families.

Like all nations, the White Sox Nation has some laws. One of my favorites is: "Respect the past . . . people that are shoeless . . . and anyone named Joe."

That last edict is a reference to one of the legends of White Sox history, Shoeless Joe Jackson, but it applies equally to our friend and colleague, Senator JOE DONNELLY, who has served his State and our Nation well and earned our great respect.

TRIBUTE TO HEIDI HEITKAMP

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in thanking Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP for her service to her State and our Nation.

I remember one of the first conversations Senator HEITKAMP and I had after she joined the Senate. I told her: "I would really like your support on a bill to help the kinds of mom-and-pop stores that are the heart of so many small towns in your state and mine."

I was about to give her my "elevator pitch" on the Marketplace Fairness Act. It wasn't necessary.

HEIDI said: "Uhm, DICK, you know the 1992 U.S. Supreme Court decision that makes the Marketplace Fairness Act necessary. I'm the petitioner in the case. 'Quill v. North Dakota?' That's me. I was the North Dakota tax commissioner who started that lawsuit."

As I was quick to learn, helping Main Street, mom-and-pop stores stay in business in the age of Amazon is just one of many causes that HEIDI HEITKAMP had been working on, tenaciously, for years before she was elected to this Senate.

HEIDI HEITKAMP came to Washington with a to-do list. She worked doggedly, with Democrats and Republicans, to whittle down that list.

It was clear from the day she arrived here that she meant to use her new position as a U.S. Senator to right as many old wrongs and fix as many intractable problems as she could.

She leaves knowing that she made a difference in the lives of countless people, in North Dakota and far beyond.

She has been a champion for Native Americans, whose voices are so rarely heard in the halls of power.

The first bill she sponsored in the Senate created a new and long overdue Commission on Native Children, to try to rectify the conditions that cause one-in-three Native American and Alaska Native children to live in poverty, with suicide rates 2.5 times the national average.

Like so much of her work here, that was a bipartisan effort. Her partner in that case was LISA MURKOWSKI.

When the Violence Against Women Act was reauthorized in 2013, it was HEIDI HEITKAMP who pushed successfully to close a loophole that allowed non-Indians who commit sexual assaults on Indian Reservations—very often—to go unpunished.

Her commitment to "make a better future" for Native children—and all children—is what motivated HEIDI to become my partner on a bill to increase and improve the treatment of childhood trauma, the root of so much suffering and violence.

We are proud that our trauma bill was included in the new law to combat the opioid epidemic. It will save lives.

HEIDI has said that her proudest achievement as a U.S. Senator was when she was able to help a Korean war veteran receive the Purple Heart and other medals.

The man, Corporal Andy Shaw, was a Native American elder who had served in World War II, was wounded in a gunfight in South Korea at the start of that conflict, and spent nearly the entire Korean war as a POW, but never received the thanks or medals he should have.

After 60 years, HEIDI HEITKAMP was able to right that wrong.

She and her staff tracked down the facts needed to document Corporal Shaw's heroism and sacrifice, and she travelled to the Spirit Lake Sioux Reservation in North Dakota to present Corporal Shaw's medals to him personally.

Andy Shaw has a little trouble standing now, but he stood proud and straight as his Senator presented his Purple Heart.

HEIDI cried because she knew how much he had sacrificed for that medal and what it meant to him.

That is who HEIDI HEITKAMP is: a woman who uses her power to help the underdog.

I wish she were not leaving so soon.

She has been a force for progress, a friend, and a leader for whom I have great respect.

I know that she has a lot of grit and determination still in her, and I look forward to seeing what her next chapter will bring.

H.R. 2

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after months of hard fought and oftentimes contentious negotiations, the Senate passed the conference report on the 2018 farm bill, titled the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, by a vote of 87 to 13. This conference bill tracks closely with the bill passed by the Senate earlier this year and embraces the bipartisan tradition of the farm bill. This is well-balanced legislation that will provide much needed certainty to the country's struggling farmers; maintain food security for millions of American families; provide for cleaner waterways, better soils, protected open space, healthier forests, and the preservation of family farms; will make our drinking water safer; and will give rural America a much-needed economic boost.

I thank Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW and all of their staff, as well as my own staff, who have worked day and night on this bipartisan effort. As I know from being chairman of the committee during the 1990 farm bill, it is no easy task to balance the needs of the various regions and commodities and the sometimes conflicting priorities among Senators when we are working within a fixed budget.

This farm bill makes continued improvements to the Margin Protection Program, MPP, after the enhancements to the program that I led in February of this year. The newly named Dairy Margin Coverage program brings the margin level up to \$9.50, lowers premium costs for a farm's first 5 million pounds of milk, and allows overlap of this program and other Department of Agriculture supported insurance programs. This bill will also help farmers initially blocked by USDA from enrolling in MPP due their participation in the Livestock Gross Margin Insurance for Dairy. They can now retroactively sign up for the improved margin protection program and access the critical benefits they missed out on this spring. A new program to incentivize milk donation is also included in this bill and will allow processors and producers to partner with charitable organizations to donate milk and reduce the waste of milk dumping.

As the father of the organic farm bill, I am pleased that the 2018 farm bill increases the funding for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative and guarantees \$50 million a year in mandatory funding by fiscal year 2023. This will ensure baseline funding for future farm bill debates and further protect this critical investment in our local and organic food system. I must add though that I am concerned by one aspect of this bill that I felt was an unnecessary change to the Organic Foods Production Act. From the beginning of the farm bill process, it was clear that some agricultural groups and some Members of Congress did not fully comprehend the importance of the National Organic Standards Board, NOSB, and the role that it plays in maintaining the integrity of the organic seal. Since first authoring the Organic Foods Production Act, I have long argued that the statute was working well, and the many tweaks and adjustments Members sought could easily be addressed administratively.

As such, I was opposed to the statutory changes sought by the House and Senate bills and am disappointed that two of the NOSB provisions related to the redundant language on voting procedures and those dictating the composition of the board were included in the final farm bill.

While I view the NOSB provisions included in the final bill to be silent on the 2013 sunset policy change, I remain opposed its inclusion because I believe it only causes confusion in the organic market and unnecessarily muddies the waters on an already contentious issue within the organic community. With respect to the makeup of the board, the current statute already included a carefully crafted balance of perspectives and interests. I feel strongly that the voice of the independent organic farmer must remain a prominent part of the NOSB and should not be diluted or drowned out as larger organic companies seek a role on the board with their employees or representatives. I