

helping to stop the generational cycle by helping Alaskan children, one child at a time, who are victims of abuse themselves and who are living in households where violence is prevalent.

Confronting the abuse of children can be a very difficult issue. It is so heart-breaking and so tragic that we often don't want to talk about it and you want to sweep it under the rug. But Cynthia, with a group of children she has gathered, is working to break that culture of silence one kid at a time. I can't think of anything more important than that.

Before I talk about what she is doing and what she has been doing, let's talk a little bit about her background. Her family is from Ruby, in Western Alaska, on the mighty Yukon River. She was raised in Tanana, a village of about 300 people near the confluence of the Yukon and Tanana Rivers, where she has been living for the past 33 years.

Many years ago I had the opportunity to visit with Cynthia and her husband in Tanana. She hosted me and some other State of Alaska officials. I remember being so welcomed by her and her family but also coming away thinking: This is a woman who is a leader and a woman of spirit and a woman of energy and a woman of passion.

We see that a lot in Alaska with Cynthia. She received a degree in elementary education from the University of Fairbanks. Her family owns a store that she worked at, but she never lost her love for children. Her house was a place where children throughout the town in Tanana went. She had things for them to do, but it was also one of those homes—and we all know the homes we are talking about in different communities throughout Alaska and the country—that kids felt safe in. That was her home.

About 5 or 6 years ago, when there was a series of suicides in her village and in nearby villages, she knew she had to do something. She called the local politician. He talked her into coming to Juneau, our State capital, to work for him. She did that for a few months, and she gathered as much information as she could about programs available to help children in crisis. But she wasn't satisfied. She concluded that there wasn't nearly enough being done.

When she got back home, she took matters into her own hands. Amassing a group of children, she started a 4-H club, which eventually morphed into a nonprofit called "Setsoo 'Yeh." That is Athabaskan for "My Grandmother's House." In Cynthia's house, kids gather to crochet, to sew, to cook, and to be. They glide on the snow outside in the winter, and they swim together in the summer. She told a reporter recently, when she was being honored: "Between all the swimming and the sewing and the beading—we all sewed our own kuspuks—in between all that, we talk about our problems."

Why? Why did she call it "My Grandmother's House"? Because every child that she spoke to who was having problems—and she spoke to a lot of them—had fond memories of a grandmother's home—a place where soup is served, bread is baked, mukluks are sewn, and a place of love and safety. Currently, Cynthia's "My Grandmother's House" is a virtual space for kids in far-flung villages, but she envisions real houses all across the State—houses where children can go and be safe.

First, she had to raise awareness of these issues that affect so many children in Alaska. In 2014 she and seven of these brave kids went to the Alaska Federation of Natives conference. That is the biggest gathering of indigenous people in North America every year. AFN comes together for the conference, usually in Anchorage or Fairbanks, and these young kids spoke on stage about what they had experienced. I remember this. It was so powerful. The stories they told of abuse that they or their friends had experienced were heartbreaking and very difficult to listen to. Importantly, they implored the elders in the audience to stop turning a blind eye to the abuse. That took so much courage from these children and their courageous leader, Cynthia.

When the presentation was over at AFN, it received a standing ovation. People cried, they thanked Cynthia, and they thanked these courageous young kids for at long last having the courage to speak out—remarkable.

Last summer, Cynthia and 11 children and a doctor—a mental health therapist—traveled on a plane, a bus, a boat—we have a very big State—to Fairbanks and to the villages of Minto, Tanana, Ruby, and Galena. It was a healing journey, they called it. At the villages, the kids formed a talking circle to talk about their experiences. Again, this is courage. It is not easy for young children to do this. They ate together, danced, prayed together, and talked some more. Cynthia said about this journey:

It's empowering the children. It's giving them a voice. It's grassroots. There are so many programs out there to help kids, but there are not boots on the ground [on the frontlines]. They aren't grassroots. These kids have had enough. They are sick of waiting for help. I tell them all the time, 'We are the ones we've been waiting for' [for the help].

That is a beautiful statement and a powerful statement: We are the ones we have been waiting for. It is a grassroots movement to do what we all know is right—to work to stamp out this kind of horrible abuse.

We just learned last night that Cynthia has been appointed to the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. It is no surprise to me. This is a woman of energy, passion, and inspiration who has done so much for these kids—and, by the way, a woman of courage. I am confident she will do a great job in that new position—a very important position in Alaska. She will bring her em-

pathy, her common sense, and her passion to protect Alaskans—particularly our children—across the State.

Cynthia, from the bottom of my heart, my friend, thanks for all the great work you do. Thanks for your courage. Thanks for your energy. Thanks for being an inspiration for all of us. Thank you for protecting our most precious asset, our most precious resource—our kids in Alaska. Thank you for creating My Grandmother's House. Everybody needs a grandmother's house. Thank you. And congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The Senator from Wyoming.

(The remarks of Mr. ENZI pertaining to the introduction of S. 1770 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

NOMINATION OF DREW H. WRIGLEY

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, in a little bit, we are going to have the opportunity to vote to confirm Drew Wrigley as the next U.S. attorney for the District of North Dakota. First of all, I want to thank Leader MCCONNELL and Leader SCHUMER for providing this opportunity to vote to confirm this outstanding candidate.

A little bit about Drew. First of all, he is a good personal friend. Drew is a sincere public servant. He has served our State as our Lieutenant Governor and previously as U.S. attorney for North Dakota under President George W. Bush. He has a servant's heart.

The thing I like so much about Drew is, besides being a professional prosecutor—and prior to even being a U.S. attorney, he was a longtime prosecutor in Philadelphia in the district attorney's office. He is good at his job. He is smart. He is compassionate. He cares as much as anything about the rule and the letter of the law and the victims of crimes. But the thing I like the most about Drew is that he is a courageous prosecutor. He doesn't just take the layups. He is willing to push to the edge for victims, for justice. He takes the tough cases, and he takes them on. Win or lose, he fights as hard as he can for the cause of justice and for the victims of crimes.

So it is a great honor for me today to advocate for Drew's confirmation, and I look forward to the opportunity in a little bit to vote for it.

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 108, 160, 161, and 206.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Drew H. Wrigley, of North Dakota, to be United States Attorney for the District of North Dakota for the term of four years; Wing Chau, of Rhode Island, to be United States Marshal for the District of Rhode Island for the term of four years; Ramona L. Dohman, of Minnesota, to be United States Marshal for the District of Minnesota for the term of four years; and Nick Edward Proffitt, of Virginia, to be United States Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that, if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Wrigley, Chau, Dohman, and Proffitt nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

##### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

#### REMEMBERING MIRIAM ZAYED

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in the early 20th century, hundreds of emigrants left the Palestinian town of

Beitunia to come to Chicago for a better life. Many could not read or write in English. Still, they set about succeeding in America and fitting into society, overcoming obstacles in a new land, becoming salesmen, shopkeepers, and factory workers. Miriam Zayed grew up in this community outside of Chicago.

Khalil Gibran once wrote, "I slept, and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke, and I saw that life is all service. I served, and I saw that service was joy." The call to service isn't an easy path, and not nearly enough answer this call, but there are times when you meet someone who embodies the joy of service. This was Miriam Zayed.

Miriam passed away last fall in October after a lifetime of leadership. She spent her life fighting for Arabs and Muslims in the Chicagoland area and the rights of everyone.

Born and raised in Chicago, Miriam always had a love of politics and education. She convinced her parents to let her go to Chicago State University, becoming among the first in her family to attend college. But there was one stipulation. Her mother had to go with her every day. Miriam's thirst for knowledge would not be deterred by having her mom take her to and from school and wait outside her classes. She went on to receive her master's degree from National Louis University in curriculum education.

Miriam was one of the first Arab Americans in the Chicagoland area to run for public office when she ran for District 230 School Board in the 1990s.

As treasurer of the Arab-American Democrat Club, Miriam brought all local politicians and candidates to attend the annual candidate's forum brunch and encouraged the Arab-American Community to attend and be recognized as voting constituents. I have attended the AADC forums, and promise you, it was always a full house, and Miriam was always working. She never sat for the entire event.

Those that attended AADC brunches, events at the United Holy Land Fund, or the Beitunia Club events knew the tireless work of Miriam Zayed. She never sought the limelight, but all who knew her respected her.

When she wasn't building her community, Miriam was teaching in the Chicago Public School system in the Englewood neighborhood in Chicago. For decades, she taught at the Earle Elementary School. She took her classes to the Art Institute in Chicago, and for some students, it was the first time they ever went downtown. She educated her students about State government and introduced them to public officials. Miriam purchased school supplies and clothing for her students too. Miriam also somehow found time to run her own business as a certified public accountant, helping people in the community with their tax preparation and planning needs. She treated everyone as family.

The week before she passed away, a candidates' forum and brunch that she

helped organize took place to celebrate politics and the 2018 election. By then, she was too ill to attend as she had done so many times before. The brunch's keynote speaker, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, reported that April would be designated Arab Heritage Month by the State of Illinois. There wasn't a better place to make that declaration.

In May of this year, Miriam will be awarded the 2019 Najeeb Halaby Award for Public Service posthumously by the Arab American Institute Foundation at the Khalil Gibran Spirit of Humanity Awards. This award is given to those who promote greater understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. Her decades of work for her students, the greater Chicago area, and the many communities of which she was a member make her more than worthy of the award.

Miriam's joy in service and love for her family and community will be missed. She is survived by her husband Refat Zayed; her children Hythem Zayed, Belal Zayed, Holly (Zayed) Murad, and Lena Hussien; and by her brothers and sisters, Nancy, Zayid, Adele, Heyam, Hanan, Cindy, and Dena.

#### TRIBUTE TO JOHN OSTENBURG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the late Pulitzer award-winning historian Studs Terkel in his seminal book, "The Good War," described how the Second World War helped give birth to a new middle class for America. The GI bill helped make new things possible. One of those things was the opening of the suburbs for everyone and not just the exclusive domain of the upper class. Thanks to the GI bill, new suburbs became places for returning soldiers and their families to earn a better way of life. This is how Park Forest entered the lexicon of Americana. It was one of America's first "GI Towns."

Park Forest has always been on the frontlines of progress. The town won the All-American City award twice, first in 1953 and then in 1977, for its work in racial integration and open housing initiatives. For the last 20 years, my friend, Mayor John Ostenburg, has maintained this tradition while leading Park Forest through a new time of transition and anxiety. Now, as John passes his leadership to a new generation, Park Forest has never been stronger.

John's vocations and career highlights were too numerous to count.

John was born and raised in Springfield, IL. Graduating high school in 1963, he joined a Catholic seminary called the Clerics of St. Viator, where he developed a lifelong sense of justice and humanity. His expertise and interest in the studies of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton earned the admiration of so many, and John regularly is published discussing Thomas Merton.