

helped increase the value of UVM's endowment by 80 percent. When appointed in 2012, Tom was given the responsibility of heading UVM's Move Mountains fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$500 million by 2020. Because of Tom's personality, passion, and, at times, persuasion, the University hit its fundraising goal a year ahead of schedule, a very impressive accomplishment considering the economic hardship that has defined the last decade. The success of this campaign increased scholarships for students, invested in top-tier faculty, and made capital investments to improve the student experience.

While the university has continued to evolve, under Tom's leadership, UVM has managed to stay true to its founding as a Land Grant university. Tom has worked tirelessly during his tenure to expand UVM's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—STEM—offerings including the 4-year construction of a \$104 million STEM Complex. Tom shares the belief that income should not be a barrier to a good education. Because of his dedication to the education of all students, Tom was instrumental in developing UVM's Catamount Commitment, which promises Pell Grant-eligible Vermonters that the remainder of their tuition will be covered, either through grants or waived by the university entirely.

Tom's tenure at UVM tops off a long and distinguished professional experience in the field of academia. Tom taught at the law schools of the University of Missouri, Washington University in St. Louis, MO, and was appointed to be a dean and professor of law at the University of Arizona College of Law. Following his time at the University of Arizona, he began his 17-year tenure at the University of Minnesota, where he eventually was appointed to become its senior vice president and provost.

Calling Tom a prolific academic and legal scholar would be an understatement. He has written 11 books and over 50 articles primarily in the field of antitrust litigation. In addition to his writings, in 2009, the Senate Judiciary Committee had the honor and privilege of obtaining Tom's advice and consultation on the confirmation of then-Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court. The lasting impact of Tom's work in the field of legal studies is no small feat and will be felt for generations to come.

It is rare to find Tom's unparalleled selfless dedication to academia and the needs of students across the country as well as throughout the world. Over the course of his 7-year tenure, Marcelle and I have had the pleasure on multiple occasions to enjoy the company of Tom and his wife Leslie. They are wonderful people who care about nothing more than giving the next generation the opportunity to succeed through academics. Tom's charming and caring presence will surely be missed on cam-

pus, but we look forward to having Tom and Leslie as Vermont residents for some time. Marcelle and I thank Tom for his service, and we wish him and Leslie all the best in the next chapter of his distinguished career.

#### TRIBUTE TO ALFRED BROWNELL

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I want to speak briefly about the courageous environmental activism of Alfred Brownell, a native of Liberia now living in exile in Boston.

Mr. Brownell is an environmental and human rights lawyer and the executive director of Green Advocates, a Liberian organization that he founded to promote environmental justice for indigenous communities. Like so many environmental activists around the world, he has been repeatedly harassed and threatened. He was forced to flee his country with his family due to fear of reprisal for his outspoken and tireless work to protect the traditional land rights of his countrymen and against the sale, without their consent, of vast areas of forest to Golden Veroleum Liberia, a Southeast Asian-based company that produces palm oil. Now a visiting scholar and teacher at Northeastern University, Mr. Brownell continues to conduct research and classes on the issues that have come to define his life.

Mr. Brownell was recently recognized by the international community for his perseverance in protecting Liberia's forests on which thousands of Liberian families and many endangered species of wildlife depend. He was honored in San Francisco and Washington as one of six recipients of the prestigious 2019 Goldman Environmental Prize. It is important that we not only pay tribute to Mr. Brownell for his extraordinary contribution to his people and his country but that we be aware that despite this international recognition, he continues to fear returning to his native country.

I have long supported U.S. assistance to help Liberia overcome years of a brutal armed conflict, and I will continue to do so. But I regret that the Liberian Government has sided with the palm oil company and against their own local farmers. Unable to intimidate Mr. Brownell, government officials tried to silence him by offering him government jobs in return for his cooperation. When that failed, they put his house and his family under police surveillance, publicly accused him of sedition and economic sabotage, accused his organization and other environmental rights organizations of undermining Liberia's sovereignty, and lied about him to incite an assassination attempt. Since December 2016, he has been living in exile, with no indication from Liberian officials that their hostility toward him and his cause has diminished.

Government intimidation of civil society activists and scholars is antithetical to open and accountable demo-

cratic societies. It is what we have come to expect of shortsighted or, even worse, corrupt officials and the outsized influence of corporate interests.

If the Liberian Government is serious about attracting foreign investment for job creation and sustainable economic development—goals we all support—it should recognize that Mr. Brownell is a patriot of whom all Liberians can be proud. Liberian officials should encourage him and his family to return to Liberia, and point to him as an example of how one courageous and determined individual can make a positive difference for the country.

Rather than benefiting a foreign corporation producing a monocrop for export, the Liberian Government should be protecting its biologically diverse forests and wildlife, not destroying them and polluting the rivers on which local inhabitants depend and displacing people who have lived there for generations.

Alfred Brownell should be a source of pride and an inspiration for all Liberians. I hope the international recognition he has received will convince the Liberian Government that it is people like him who deserve our admiration and our thanks.

#### HONORING SERGEANT SEAN M. GANNON AND SERGEANT MICHAEL C. CHESNA AND PATROLMAN LEON F. MOODY

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, this week the country will observe National Police Week, a week in honor of the courageous law enforcement officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities.

As we honor the service of our brave men and women in the law enforcement community, I would like to take the opportunity to honor the life and memory of three law enforcement officers from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities: Sean M. Gannon, Michael C. Chesna, and Leon F. Moody.

Sergeant Sean Gannon, of New Bedford, was killed in the line of duty on April 12, 2018. He was a lifelong public servant, first serving as a public safety officer and later becoming a police officer with the Yarmouth Police Department, where he served for 8 years. When he wasn't on duty, Sergeant Gannon enjoyed volunteering with Big Brothers Big Sisters, spending time outdoors, traveling, and devoting time to family and friends.

Sergeant Gannon, who lost his life at the age of 32, was the beloved son of Denise Morency Gannon and Patrick Gannon and a devoted husband to his wife Dara.

Sergeant Michael Chesna, who was killed in the line of duty on July 15, 2018, dedicated his life to his country, his community, and his family. A native of Hanover, MA, Sergeant Chesna enlisted in the U.S. Army following the September 11 attacks, serving two

tours of duty with the 187 10th Mountain Division, where he was awarded the Purple Heart. Following his service in the Army, Sergeant Chesna became a police officer with the city of Weymouth, where he served until his untimely death at the age of 42.

Sergeant Chesna was a loving husband to his wife Cindy and father to his children Olivia and Jack. He was an avid Boston sports fan who enjoyed playing basketball, collecting sports memorabilia, and spending time with family and friends.

Patrolman Leon Moody of the Worcester Police Department died of an illness he sustained in the line of duty in 1932. He served the Worcester P.D. bravely for 15 years, before passing away at the age of 44.

Sergeants Gannon and Chesna and Patrolman Moody are among 371 law enforcement officers who died while protecting their communities and whose names were engraved this week on the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, DC.

This week and every day, we honor their service and their sacrifice. Most importantly, we honor the lives they lived and legacies they leave behind. May their memories continue to challenge and inspire us.

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my opening statement at the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be printed in the RECORD.

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

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Reid Blackwelder is a family physician with three clinics in the Tri-Cities area of East Tennessee.

A few years ago, he talked to the New York Times about the electric health records that were supposed to make his life easier, saying, “We have electronic records at our clinic, but the hospital, which I can see from my window, has a separate system from a different vendor. The two don’t communicate. When I admit patients to the hospital, I have to print out my notes and send a copy to the hospital so they can be incorporated into the hospital’s electronic records.”

Dr. Blackwelder could pay for his patients’ hospital records to be electronically sent from his system to the hospital’s system—but it would cost him \$26,400 every month—or \$316,800 a year. For Dr. Blackwelder, and so many other doctors, record keeping is now more expensive and burdensome.

In 1991, the National Academy of Medicine released a report urging the “prompt development and implementation” of what were then called computer-based patient records. The report said these systems, “have a unique potential to improve the care of both individual patients and . . . to reduce waste through continuous quality improvement.” Electronic health records got a boost in 2009 when the federal government began the Meaningful Use program, spending over \$36 billion in grants to incentivize doctors and hospitals to use these systems.

As was the prediction in the 1991 report, the hope was electronic records would improve patient care and reduce unnecessary health care spending. This is important because, at a hearing last summer, Dr. Brent James, from the National Academies, testified that up to 50 percent of what we spend on health care is unnecessary.

There is a bipartisan focus both in Congress and in the Administration on reducing health care costs. One way to reduce what we spend on administrative tasks and unnecessary care is by having electronic health records that talk to one another—we call that interoperability.

But in 2015—six years after the Meaningful Use program started—as this Committee worked on the 21st Century Cures Act, we realized that, in many cases, electronic health records added to administrative burden and increased unnecessary health care spending.

A major reason for that is that the records are not interoperable. One barrier to interoperability is information blocking—which is when some obstacle is in the way of a patient’s information being sent from one doctor to another.

So, in 2015, this committee held six bipartisan hearings and formed a working group to find ways to fix the interoperability of electronic health records. These hearings led to a bipartisan group of HELP Committee members working together to include a provision in the 21st Century Cures Act to stop information blocking and encourage interoperability.

Today’s hearing is about two new rules the Department of Health and Human Services has proposed to implement this provision in the 21st Century Cures Act. These two rules are complicated, but I’d like to highlight a few ways that they lay out a path toward interoperability:

First, the rules define information blocking—so it is more precisely clear what we mean when one system, hospital, doctor, vendor, or insurer is purposefully not sharing information with another;

Second, the rules require that by January 1, 2020, for the first time, insurers must share a patient’s health care data with the patient so their health information follows them as they see different doctors;

Third, all electronic health records must adopt the same standards for data elements, known as an Application Programming Interface, or API, two years after these rules are completed.

Fourth, hospitals are required to send electronic notifications to a patient’s doctors, immediately, when that patient is admitted to, discharged from, or transferred from the hospital.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, these two new rules should give more than 125 million patients easier access to their own records in an electronic format. This will be a huge relief to any of us who have spent hours tracking down paper copies of our records and carting them back and forth to different doctors’ offices.

The rules will reduce administrative burden on doctors so they can spend more time with patients. A recent study from Kaiser found that emergency room doctors, in order to use electronic health records systems, make up to 4,000 mouse clicks per shift. If electronic health records data was truly interoperable, it would greatly reduce how many clicks doctors have to make. According to HHS, spending less time on these administrative tasks will improve efficiency and therefore could save \$3.3 billion a year. And because doctors can see patients’ full medical history, they can avoid ordering unnecessary tests and procedures.

I also want to be aware of unintended consequences from these rules: Are these rules

moving too fast? In 2015, I urged the Obama Administration to slow down the Meaningful Use program, which they did not do, and looking back, the results would have been better if they had.

Are the standards for data elements too rigid? Is the door still open for bad actors to game the system and continue to information block? And how can we ensure patient privacy as patients gain more access and control over their personal health information. And how do we help them keep it secure?

I want to ensure these rules will make the problem of information blocking better, not worse. I look forward to any specific suggestions to improve these rules from those who use electronic health records systems.

Electronic health records that work can give patients better outcomes and better experiences at a lower cost.

#### STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my opening statement at the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be printed in the RECORD.

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

#### STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. ALEXANDER. When I was president of the University of Tennessee, I asked David Gardner, who was then president of the University of California, why his university was considered one of the best in the world. He told me:

First, autonomy. We basically have four branches of government, he said, and one of them is the University of California.

Second, competition and choice—large amounts of state and federal money following students to the campus of their choice.

Third, a commitment to excellence by institutional leaders and faculty.

As a former university president, I am very much aware that despite that autonomy, our country’s 6000 colleges and universities report to a lot of bosses—they are accountable to a great many individuals, boards, governments and other entities.

First, they are accountable to the students who may take their federal and state grants and loans to any accredited institution that will admit them;

Next, to 44 federally recognized accrediting agencies whose certification of quality is necessary before institutions are allowed to accept students who bring \$30 billion in new Pell grants and \$100 billion in federal student loans each year;

To ensure that these billions of dollars are spent wisely, the federal government measures how many students default on their loans;

For the 80 percent of students who attend public colleges and universities, states have governors, state legislators, laws, and state higher education authorities;

Every institution, public or private, also has its own board of trustees or directors;

And in addition, there are specific federal rules for the for-profit institutions, which about five percent of students attend, in order to stop fraud against students and tax-payers;

And when making a list of bosses, no former university president should leave out the faculty—most faculty members I have known take great pride in maintaining institutional excellence.

So any president of an American higher education institution has a lot of bosses and