

policy, rather than rely on a handful of extreme voices that are not representative of the majority of the American people or the majority of Members of Congress.

POLIO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today is World Polio Day, and I want to comment briefly about the funding to support global polio eradication efforts in the Senate version of the fiscal year 2020 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which was reported unanimously by the Appropriations Committee on September 26.

Polio is a highly infectious, crippling, and potentially fatal disease. While there is no cure, there are safe and effective vaccines. The global strategy to eradicate polio, therefore, focuses on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops and the world is polio-free.

Through the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, the United States provides financial support and technical leadership around the world to support the eradication strategy. USAID focuses specifically on recognizing and raising the importance of identifying and reaching mobile populations, cross-border coordination, communications, and the need for more women vaccinators and community-based disease surveillance.

Since global polio eradication efforts began 30 years ago, when cases numbered 350,000 annually, polio has been eliminated in more than 120 countries and remains endemic in only three—Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

While significant progress has been made, much work remains. Cases of polio persist in insecure areas and in countries with porous borders and large migratory populations, posing considerable obstacles to eradication. However, while there have been real setbacks, and the goal posts continue to change, complacency is not an option.

To that end, the Appropriations Committee has recommended \$61 million in fiscal year 2020—an increase of \$2 million over last year—for USAID's polio eradication activities. Increased resources are necessary to get over the finish line in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, and to demonstrate the continued U.S. commitment to polio eradication. It is our hope that this increase will cause other donors to follow our example.

I am not alone in my support for these activities. The State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee heard from more than 20 members, Republicans and Democrats, requesting funding for global polio eradication efforts in fiscal year 2020.

So while many Senators have advocated for this critical funding, I want to be sure that all 100 Senators are aware of these efforts which are essential to achieving a polio-free world.

REMEMBERING ELIJAH CUMMINGS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, my heart is heavy today as we mourn the loss of Congressman Elijah Cummings. He was a powerful voice for the people of Baltimore, a champion of justice for our country, and a dear friend to me and so many others.

I first met Elijah when he was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, where I was the speaker, but our lives had intersected in formative ways even before that. We both grew up in Baltimore and shared a deep and abiding love for the city. We went to the same high school—Baltimore City College High School—and we both earned law degrees from the University of Maryland before balancing private law practices with public service in the Maryland General Assembly.

So when I met Elijah, I couldn't help but feel a kinship with him, but I think that was perhaps just Elijah's power—the ability to build kinship with anyone and the commitment to do so with everyone. He was constantly searching for common ground, always looking to make human connections. As a result, he developed meaningful friendships with people all over the political, social, religious, and geographic map.

Elijah's talent for building consensus, as well as his work ethic and dedication to his constituents, propelled him early on to positions of leadership in the Maryland House of Delegates. There, he became the youngest ever chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus and the first African American to be named speaker pro tempore. He served in that chamber for 14 years, during which he worked tirelessly to advance the rights and opportunities of Maryland residents.

Then, in 1996, Elijah was elected to represent Maryland's Seventh District, including our home of Baltimore, in the U.S. House of Representatives. He filled a seat previously occupied by civil rights legacies Parren Mitchell and Kweisi Mfume, and, let me tell you, there was no person more prepared to carry on their fight for equality and freedom.

Elijah was the son of sharecroppers who worked the same land in South Carolina where his ancestors had been enslaved. His parents moved to Baltimore to build a better life for their family, but the city was rife with racial intolerance. From a young age, Elijah faced prejudice and discrimination. He attended a segregated elementary school, and he was pelted with bottles, rocks, and jeers when he and other children integrated the local public swimming pool.

In the face of all that hatred, he found the hope and determination to overcome every obstacle set before him so that he could rise up and lift others up too. He worked diligently, excelling as an undergraduate at Howard University, going to law school even though people told him he could never become a lawyer, successfully practicing law, and then launching a career of public

service that led him to the U.S. Congress. Elijah continued to climb until he was elected Chairman of the House Oversight Committee.

All the while, he remained firmly based in his community. He lived in the same house in West Baltimore for more than 30 years—in the inner inner city, as he put it—and he returned home every night after a long day of work in DC. He was known to sit on the stoop of that house and feed the neighborhood pigeons. And every Sunday, he went to church, where he was often met by a line of people waiting to share their concerns, and he would listen to them and try to help them all.

Elijah never for a moment forgot that his purpose was to represent the folks back home in his district, to be a voice for the many who were silenced. He once said that while it was his "constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the executive branch," it was his "moral duty" to fight for his constituents. And fight, he did. In the 23 years that he spent in Congress, he was a fierce advocate for his district, especially for Baltimore. Where others saw problems and danger, he saw opportunities and solutions. He advanced measures to improve education, to expand affordable housing, to curb addiction, to enhance public infrastructure, to promote gun safety, and to reform police practices. He worked to erase the racial and class divides that he had grown up with, so that future generations of Baltimoreans would not face the same obstacles he did.

Although he never shied away from contentious issues, he also understood when harmony and healing were needed. After the tragic death of Freddie Gray, Elijah went to the streets to ask the citizens of Baltimore to come together and find a peaceful path forward. Then, true to form, he launched into action, pushing hard for policies and programs to help the city recover.

Because of his heroic service to his constituents, Elijah was beloved by his community, perhaps more than any other elected official I have known. His loss is a devastating blow to Baltimore and to Elijah's entire congressional district.

But it is not just Maryland that will feel this loss—Elijah's passing leaves an unfillable void for the Nation as a whole. He loved this country deeply. Elijah believed in the potential of American ideals, so he held us to the highest moral standards. In moments of moral crisis, he would famously remind whoever was listening, "We are better than this!"

He was passionate about rooting out corruption, protecting our democracy, and achieving equality and freedom for all. As chairman of the Oversight Committee and in life, he fought for what was right simply because it was right. And Heaven forbid anyone should stand between Elijah Cummings and justice, because, while Elijah was always calm and respectful, he was never afraid to hold someone's feet to the fire.

He gave every ounce of himself, up until his last day on Earth, to defending the honor of our Republic. We have lost a booming voice for truth, fairness, and liberty that can never be replaced.

I grieve for a nation without Elijah's leadership. I know that we will hold his legacy close to our hearts and that we will strive to follow his example of moral clarity, but the loss of Elijah Cummings has ripped a hole in the fabric of our country that cannot be fully mended.

My thoughts and prayers are with Elijah's wife Maya, his three children, and all of his loved ones. Know that we are mourning alongside you.

And to Elijah—you left this world a better place than how you found it. Now it is time to rest.

HONORING RADIOMAN 2ND CLASS FLOYD A. WELLS

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life and patriotism of Radioman 2nd Class Floyd A. Wells. A native of Cavalier, ND, he answered the call to defend his country during World War II. At the age of 24, he made the ultimate sacrifice on December 7, 1941, along with 2,402 other soldiers and sailors during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

It was not until earlier this year that his remains were positively identified, and on October 1 he was brought home to be buried at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. Attending this burial were members of his family who traveled from across the Nation to pay their respects to this beloved member of their family. Even though most of them had never met him, together they mourned the lost blessings of Floyd not being a part of their family for the past 78 years.

He was remembered as a generous man and a gifted athlete who had a full life ahead of him. Floyd's life could have included competing in sports at college and having a family and home of his own.

Floyd's burial service was a poignant reminder of how the sacrifice of heroes defending our country has an impact on those who knew and loved them far into the future. He died so Americans could live in peace and prosperity. I am thankful he is now back in his home State, lying in eternal rest with other North Dakota heroes, and I am grateful for the continued work of the many patriots who are committed to identifying the remains of all unknown soldiers and bringing them home.

Mr. President, to the family of Radioman 2nd Class Floyd A. Wells, I join citizens across the Nation in sending our sincere condolences. It is heroes like Floyd whose service has kept our communities, State, Nation, and world safe. His life made a difference in the lives of all of us, and we are forever grateful.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING THOMAS D'ALESSANDRO III

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I stand here today to grieve the loss and honor the memory of Thomas D'Alesandro III, a true public servant. I feel extremely fortunate to have benefited from Tommy's wisdom, his friendship, and his example over the years. He will be dearly missed.

Thomas—or "Little Tommy," as he was known—was born in Baltimore in 1929. He grew up in a very politically active home. His father was a Congressman and three-term mayor of Baltimore. His sister, NANCY PELOSI, went on to become the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. So, in a sense, it seems that Tommy was destined for life in the public sphere. But he never behaved like leadership was his birthright. Whatever the import his name carried, Tommy was always humble, always hard-working, always determined to earn the support and trust of his community. And that is exactly what he did. As president of the Baltimore City Council and then as the city's mayor, Tommy was on the ground, fighting alongside his constituents for what was right.

Tommy was the mayor of Baltimore from 1967 to 1971. It was a tumultuous time for Baltimore and for the entire Nation. After just 4 months in office, Tommy had to lead his city through the grief and unrest that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Despite being personally devastated, he did that with courage and grace. He went on to serve a term marked by an unyielding commitment to civil rights.

Tommy passed laws to ban discrimination in housing and public accommodations. He fought the racist practice of blockbusting in real estate. He funded anti-poverty programs and new schools in underserved neighborhoods. And he appointed more African Americans to public posts than any Baltimore mayor before him, including to positions that had only previously been held by White people.

He was a man of ideals, certainly. His Catholic upbringing instilled in him the values of generosity and fairness. He had a nuanced understanding of racial inequality in the United States, and he was profoundly disturbed by the intolerance plaguing the country.

But I believe that he earned the support and trust of his community because he didn't just espouse ideals—he didn't simply demand justice or condemn hatred. He delivered concrete, meaningful action to make Baltimore a more equal and harmonious place.

Tommy did all of this because he sincerely cared, not because it was politically convenient. In fact, he faced a lot of criticism for his leadership on civil rights from those who wished to preserve their own privilege. The easy thing would have been to turn a blind

eye to the injustices around him and protect the status quo, but that wasn't Tommy. He wasn't concerned with what was easy; he was concerned with what was right. He had a good heart, and he listened to it.

Even after leaving political office, Tommy continued to give back as a mentor and adviser to future leaders. I am immensely grateful for the counsel that he offered me as a budding lawmaker. As a Baltimore native myself, I have long looked up to Tommy and strived to follow in his footsteps. I can only hope to emulate his integrity, bravery, and compassion.

We have lost a hero and a legend but not a legacy. Tommy was somebody who always led by example. Even though he is no longer here with us, his example lives on. It lives on in the blossoming Baltimore that he cultivated. It lives on in the generations of dedicated public servants that he inspired. And it lives on in the quest for justice that he championed.

Nevertheless, this loss is a painful one. My heart and prayers are with Tommy's wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all of his loved ones as they grieve and heal.●

TRIBUTE TO SARA MEDALEN

• Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a remarkable woman who has been named North Dakota's Teacher of the Year. Sara Medalen is a reading and math interventionist at Sunnyside Elementary School in Minot.

While working with students to improve their reading and math skills, she has also implemented other innovative programs helping Sunnyside students gain greater self esteem. Girls arrive mornings before school for Books and Braids, so she can braid their hair while they read to her. The Girl Power group does charitable projects and hears from local women in various professions around town. Her STEAM Saturdays bring students together to collaborate on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics projects, and Strides for Sunnyside is a running group encouraging students to embrace healthy habits and physical fitness. Through these programs and her genuine love for teaching and learning, Ms. Medalen has made a profound difference at Sunnyside School. She is an inspiration to her students, parents and fellow educators across North Dakota.

Mr. President, I congratulate Sara Medalen on this well-deserved recognition. We all remember favorite teachers from our own schooldays, and no doubt they share many of the good qualities that Ms. Medalen brings to her classroom. WalletHub recently ranked North Dakota as one of the best States for teachers, and my State has many top quality educators who are just as remarkable as Sara Medalen. We cannot thank them enough for the positive impact they have every day on North Dakota students.●