

the game. After that game many felt that an Orioles sweep of the Mets was a very good possibility. The tenacious Mets had other ideas, and went on to win the next four games in a row to become the champions.

In game two, their oldest member, Ed Charles, 38, came through, batting, and helped end the game with a difficult and brilliant throw to Donn Clendenon at first base.

Game three was all about two magnificent running catches by center fielder Tommie Agee. The first, with two runners on base, was caught in the webbing of his glove, the white of the baseball protruding from the glove, while the second diving catch was made with the bases loaded.

Game four the Mets won because the correct call was not made. J.C. Martin bunted in the bottom of the 10th inning and ran to first base on the wrong side of the first base line. Because of that, Oriole pitcher Pete Richert's throw hit Martin's wrist and the ball rolled to the ground, allowing Rod Gaspar to score the winning run. Martin should have been called out, but he was not.

The final game was won by the Mets because of smart, creative and detailed thinking by Mets manager Gil Hodges. In the bottom of the sixth inning, with the Mets trailing 3-0, Dave McNally's pitch to Cleon Jones went low and ended up in the Mets dugout. Umpire Lou DiMuro ruled the ball had not hit Jones. Hodges then emerged with the baseball showing a smudge of shoe polish on it. Jones was then awarded first base, and the next batter, Donn Clendenon, would hit a two-run homer, and the Mets would go on to win the game, 5-3.

The challenges we face can feel disheartening. We may feel like the Mets before the '69 season began, when the past suggested 100 to 1 odds against a different and better outcome. But change did happen. Fifty years later, that uplifting lesson should not be lost on us.

We are also reminded of that lesson in the Bible, where Moses's last speech to the people is a poem. We see in the life of Moses—who 40 years earlier said to God, "I have never been a man of words . . . I am slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exodus 4:10)—someone who develops from a poor orator to a master of prose and poetry.

That which appears to be insurmountable may be difficult to overcome, but as Babe Ruth said, "Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game." The batter's box awaits.

The writer, rabbi emeritus of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont, teaches at Bennington College and the Kibbutz Ketura campus of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies.

#### OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the world's oceans serve as a crucial carbon sink, a home to hundreds of thousands of known and countless unknown species of marine life, an essential source of protein for billions of people, and a facilitator of billions of dollars in tourism, fishing, shipping, and other economic activity. Today, the oceans, on which life on Earth depends, are under serious threat.

Threats from climate change, habitat destruction, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and pollution—plastic waste pollution in particular—are accelerating and causing potentially irreparable harm to this planet.

I spoke recently on the significant health, environmental, and economic

impacts of the more than 300 billion pounds of plastic waste circulating in the oceans, and on funding in the Senate version of the fiscal year 2020 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill to strengthen U.S. efforts to address this pollution.

Today I will further discuss the scale of the problem and actions that governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private companies, and other stakeholders can take to address this challenge.

I want to share a few findings and recommendations from a report recently published by Ocean Conservancy and the Trash Free Seas Alliance, a global group of companies and NGOs seeking to reduce and reinvent products and services that contribute to ocean pollution.

Absent collective action, the report depicts a bleak future—one involving more than 550 billion pounds of plastic waste in the oceans by 2025, clogging our rivers and waterways, threatening marine life and seabirds, endangering human health, contaminating the food supply, and triggering a significant decline in economic benefits.

For perspective, the amount of plastic entering the oceans each year is equivalent to dumping a garbage truck full of plastic into the ocean every minute of every hour of every day. That is 1,440 truckloads of plastic per day, or more than half a million truckloads per year. And, of course, this does not include the immense amounts of chemical waste and other types of pollution that enter the oceans every day.

As the report describes, rising ocean plastic pollution is a direct result of the increasing global production and use of plastic, which totals more than 750 billion pounds per year, an estimated 40 percent of which is single-use. Waste management systems, particularly in developing countries, are woefully incapable of managing the growing quantity of plastic waste.

So the majority of plastic entering the oceans was never collected as part of a formal waste management system, and without increased resources for waste management programs and improvements to collection infrastructure, developing countries—and the oceans—will continue to be inundated with plastic waste.

There is no single solution. Instead, the report outlines four priority areas on which to focus our collective efforts: financing the collection of plastic waste; reducing the production and use of single-use plastics; improving design standards to address nonrecyclable or difficult to recycle plastics; and increasing the demand for post-consumer plastics.

One option for increasing resources to finance the collection of plastic waste is by charging fees to companies based on the amount of nonrecyclable materials used in their products. Such fees have the potential to generate up to 75 percent of the resources needed to

support effective waste collection programs. And increasing the demand for recycled products—one of the other priority lines of effort—reportedly has the potential to reduce the resources needed for such programs by more than 30 percent. Other options for tackling plastic pollution include a ban on microplastics, incentive programs for recycling, preferential procurement policies, and the use of refillable packaging.

All of this is to say that steps can, and must, be urgently taken. While ocean plastic pollution may be a devastating and growing challenge, it is not an insurmountable one.

And as I have said before, while the United States should significantly increase our engagement and leadership on this issue, we cannot solve this problem alone. There is no greater unifier than the oceans. Their protection should be of the utmost importance to governments, companies, and individuals on every continent and in every country.

#### TRIBUTE TO MAIDA TOWNSEND

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would like to take a moment to celebrate the achievements of Maida Townsend, a Vermont State Representative and now a decorated figure skater, who recently took home the gold medal in an international figure skating competition in Lake Placid, NY. Marcelle and I have known Maida for many years, and we have always been impressed with her dedication, artistry, and selflessness. While we have come to know Maida through her tireless work for the State of Vermont, we have been impressed, but not surprised, that she brings the same dedication to figure skating, a sport she picked up at the age of 50.

Maida has served the State of Vermont over the years through her leadership as the president of the Vermont branch of the National Education Association, as a chair of the Vermont Democratic Party, and in recent years as a State representative for South Burlington. Most noteworthy though is Maida's long career as a public school teacher, a career in which she has taught young Vermonters the French language for well over 30 years. Maida's career of public service is exemplary. I know that she will continue to dedicate herself to Vermont for many more years to come.

But just as inspiring as her long career in public service is her pursuit of a personal joy and passion, that of figure skating. Maida, proving it is never too late to pursue a new joy, is as dedicated to her sport as she is to her career. Starting her days hours before many of us see the sun rise, Maida hits the ice before she hits the halls of the State legislature. Maida is a friend, a true Vermonter, and a true treasure.

Marcelle and I are proud to join her loved ones in offering a hearty congratulations to Maida Townsend on

this impressive win in one of her many passions. We are lucky to know her, and Vermont is lucky to have her.

I ask unanimous consent that the article, "State rep wins gold in international skating competition," originally published by "The Other Paper," be printed in the RECORD.

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

[The Other Paper Nov. 7, 2019]

STATE REP WINS GOLD IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

It was an introduction even Townsend—Chittenden District 7-4 State representative—wasn't expecting to hear. But sure enough, it's how she was presented to judges, the audience and her fellow competitors at the International Adult Figure Skating Competition in Lake Placid, N.Y., on Oct. 17.

"I confess that it got my attention being introduced as representing the United States as opposed to representing my club, which is what I am used to hearing," Townsend said.

But represent the U.S. she did, as skaters from around the globe filled the Olympic-size rink. In her own category, Adult Ladies Bronze V division—V designating competitors born in 1951 or earlier—Townsend skated against three other Americans and a Canadian to earn the gold.

As she took to the ice, she noted the judges' position and prepared herself for the music to begin. "Bumpin' on Sunset," a Jazz song by Wes Montgomery, filled the arena. It was a personal selection, as most of Townsend's program music is.

"There is the adage, let the music take you there," she said. "It does; you have practiced so long, over and over again, this music is part of a person and the music just carried me."

As she left the ice and awaited her score, Townsend felt great pride. She knew she had skated well and met her requirements.

"I'm my hardest critic," she said, but added, "I knew when I came off the ice that I'd skated it really well."

But getting to victory was no small feat. Townsend began preparing her program with her coach, Martha Harding, in early summer. The two worked an hour each day Tuesday through Thursday, adding in Fridays the month before internationals.

The program looked better each week, until just before internationals.

"For two solid weeks before this competition, nothing was working right, everything was falling apart," Townsend said. "I was psyching myself out."

But getting on the "storied rink" at Lake Placid—where countless "greats" like the Russian duo, the Protopopovs, Sonja Henie and Scott Hamilton have skated—made the rough practices disappear.

"I got on the ice to do the program and it was like those two awful weeks never happened," Townsend said. "I was in the zone and it just felt so good."

What's noteworthy about Townsend's skating is that it only began 25 years ago, when she was 50 years old.

Townsend was an avid fan of watching the elite figure skaters on television.

"I'd find myself just so drawn to it, and oftentimes I'd find it so beautiful I was there crying watching the performances," she said.

When an ad for group skating lessons stared up at her from the pages of a newspaper, Townsend knew the message was meant for her.

Townsend wasn't fearful about safety when she hit the ice for the first time. Rather, she said she was concerned about being the "tallest skater." Figure skating is a sport that

typically attracts a less aged crowd, but Townsend discovered age is but a number. She practiced the basics in group lessons, then found a coach to study under.

With Coach Julie MacDonald's help, Townsend honed her skills and grew tremendously. Though Townsend was content to continue lessons with MacDonald, her coach saw a greater future for her.

"At a given point in time, Julie [MacDonald] informed me that she needed to kick me out of the nest," Townsend said. "I was very comfortable with Julie and she sensed I was too comfortable." That's when Townsend paired with Harding.

"Martha [Harding] was this really big deal coach," Townsend recalls. "I was really scared, I remember saying to Julia, 'What if she rejects me?'"

But Townsend met all of Harding's requirements and the duo has worked well together ever since.

"Julie knew what she was doing when she kicked me out of the nest," Townsend said. "Martha worked with me, understanding as an older skater my goals are very different from a kids'."

Harding and Townsend spend much of their time working on "quality skating." For Townsend, that means dedicating effort to flow, posture and working the edges of her blades.

"To me, skating is when your foot is on the ice, as opposed to jump, jump, jump, jump," she said. "There's the whole business of interpreting the music ... if all you're doing is going back and forth jump, back and forth jump, it's not being one with the music."

Don't let that fool you, Townsend still gets some air. In her early years with Harding, she did all the single jumps—save for the Axel. Today she does what jumps and spins her body permits.

And one of her big requirements is looking confident and competent on the ice. It's not uncommon for people who start skating in their adulthood to be more cautious than their youthful counterparts, according to Townsend.

"Adults are more cautious in skating, I think, than kids are," she said. "Kids don't have so far to fall, kids heal a lot faster than adults and kids don't have to go to work the next day."

But Townsend challenges that. In fact, she's had judges assume she's skated for most of her life. And though Townsend is the first to say she's learned a great deal from Harding, Harding says the feeling is mutual. "I've learned a lot from [Townsend] as far as being disciplined," Harding said.

Townsend's disciplined nature keeps her skating even when the Legislature is in session. During the session, she's up at 3:15 a.m. to walk her dog and prepare for the day, then she's on the ice at 5:45 a.m. and en route to the Capitol by 6:35 a.m. But skating is good for both mind and body, Townsend said. During the session it's a joyful event that can be "cleansing."

"If I didn't skate I think I'd be a much older 75 than I am," Townsend said.

That's why Townsend would recommend the sport to anyone who's interested but perhaps trepidatious to skate.

"You're not too old to do it. There's no reason to be defined by a number," she said. "I really believe that. I intend to keep skating 'til my body tells me, 'Stop.' So far my body's nowhere near telling me to stop."

#### BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I implore the Senate to take up legislation addressing America's gun violence epi-

demio. We must pass legislation requiring universal and completed background checks for individuals seeking to purchase a gun, to help insure that guns do not fall into the wrong hands, with deadly results.

Last week, on the morning of November 14, it was a normal Thursday at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, CA. Just before second period, a 16-year-old boy pulled a semiautomatic pistol out of his backpack. In just 16 seconds, he shot five of his classmates, killing two. A short time later, he turned the gun on himself.

After hearing the gunshots, Katie Holt, a teacher at Saugus High School, rushed students into her classroom and barricaded the door. One of the injured girls made it into Holt's classroom. Thankfully and incredibly, Holt had a gunshot wound kit in case of a school shooting. The girl had been shot twice, and Holt only had one kit. Holt dressed the two wounds as best she could with one kit, while a freshman student applied pressure. The injured girl survived.

Katie Holt's preparedness and quick action likely saved that young girl's life. As we commend her heroic actions, we have to ask ourselves: How did we get to this point? How did we get a place where American teachers feel obligated to keep gunshot wound kits in their classrooms?

We also mourn the tragic loss of life in several other recent mass shootings. On November 18, three people were killed outside a Walmart in Duncan, OK. Just this past weekend, on November 17 in Fresno, CA, 10 individuals were shot and 4 were killed at a football watch party. On October 31 in Orina, CA, five individuals were killed and four wounded at a Halloween block party. And we all remember the horrific spate of mass shootings this summer, including those in Texas, Ohio, California, and Virginia, leading to dozens killed.

In February 2019, the House passed H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, by a bipartisan vote of 240-190. That month, the House also passed H.R. 1112, the Enhanced Background Checks Act. Since that time, these bills have languished in the Senate where the Republican leader refuses to allow Senate consideration.

By refusing to take up legislation to require universal and completed background checks, the Senate is failing the American people. We have a responsibility to pass commonsense gun reform to end the senseless bloodshed. We need gun reform now, not only to address our country's seemingly endless cycle of mass shootings, but we need gun safety legislation now because our communities are ravaged by daily gun violence that does not make news headlines.

On average, about every 13 hours, someone is killed with a gun in Maryland. On average, 656 Marylanders die from fatal gunshot wounds every year. Firearms are the first leading cause of