

exactly what the WEEE Act recognizes and seeks to capitalize on.

As Senator CARDIN, senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, noted when we introduced the bill: “Investment in women creates a positive cycle of change that can lift women, families, communities, and entire countries out of poverty, and this legislation will help us make inroads toward that important goal.”

I would like to thank former Chairman Ed Royce and Congresswoman FRANKEL, as well as their staffs, for their leadership on this bill in the House.

I would also like to thank Senator CARDIN for joining me in sponsoring the bill here in the Senate, as well as our former colleague and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, for his work to move this bill through the committee process.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance provided by the White House, particularly from Presidential Advisor Ivanka Trump, who worked tirelessly to advocate for this bill, garner support from NGOs, and ultimately helped us see it across the finish line.

All of those who worked on this bill share an understanding that because women in some parts of the world are pushed so far to the margins that they are denied access to even the most basic financial services, much less business loans, leveling the playing field is the right thing to do. If we can achieve this goal, the world economy stands to grow significantly.

Now that the WEEE Act has become law, we have taken one significant step forward to realizing this laudable aim, and women in developing nations stand to benefit from USAID’s upcoming efforts to help them find and secure their place in our global economy.

The Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act advances U.S. values and stimulates real, lasting economic opportunities around the globe for women. It will change lives and communities, promote equality, and help entrepreneurs and innovators thrive—all of which will benefit the global economy and the pursuit of prosperity.

Once again, I extend my thanks and gratitude to all who have worked so hard and helped this bill become law, and I look forward to following its implementation and results.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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 BOB LEEPER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for more than 30 years, the men and women of Paducah, KY, have prospered with the leadership of my friend, Bob Leeper, in city, State, and finally county government. There are few individuals more appreciated for their public service in western Kentucky. At the end of last year, Bob completed his term as McCracken County judge-executive, and I would like to take a moment to offer my gratitude and reflect on his many years of service.

There is a common expression identifying two types of people who are elected to office: show horses and work horses. The first kind thrives when driving home a point in front of the camera or in making a bold headline. On the other hand, a work horse will forgo acclaim in favor of accomplishment and reject praise for progress. Without a doubt, Bob has spent his career as a work horse. His achievements will leave a lasting impact on the area and our Commonwealth.

To say the least, Bob cared little for party labels. As a matter of fact, during his distinguished career, Bob hit the political “trifecta” of sorts, having been elected by his constituents as a registered Democrat, then a Republican, and lastly as an Independent.

In his first elected office as Paducah city commissioner, Bob also served as mayor pro tem and quickly earned his colleagues’ respect. From there, Bob won a seat in the Kentucky State Senate. In Frankfort, Bob set himself apart as a constructive leader and a problemsolver. His reputation for handling complex issues with fairness garnered the appreciation of his fellow senators on both sides of the aisle.

Reelected five times, Bob served for 24 years in Kentucky’s legislature including as the chair of the senate appropriations and revenue committee. His work from this important post displayed his integrity, skill, and his characteristic nature as a work horse.

Bob chose to leave the Senate in 2014, but that didn’t end his career of public service. The same year, he was elected as the McCracken County judge-executive, the top job in county government. In that role, Bob had the opportunity to continue serving his community and making positive impacts on the lives of his neighbors. Among his proudest accomplishments, he includes a number of infrastructure improvements at the courthouse, jail, road department, and in the local parks. I enjoyed partnering with him on behalf of workers at Paducah’s U.S. Department of Energy site.

For his decades of service in Kentucky, the current members of the Paducah City Commission wanted to express their gratitude to Bob at his retirement with a lasting testament to his work. The commission unanimously voted to name a footbridge in his honor in Paducah. When completed, the Bob Leeper Bridge will connect the city and county’s trail systems, a fit-

ting tribute to a man who spent his career working to benefit his community.

As he enters his retirement from public service, Bob plans to return to his first calling: treating patients at his chiropractic clinic. He also will spend more time volunteering, playing tennis, and relaxing with his beloved wife Gina. It is my privilege to join so many in McCracken County to thank Bob for his three decades of committed vision and leadership. I ask my Senate colleagues to help me congratulate Judge-Executive Bob Leeper on this milestone and to extend best wishes in his retirement.

Mr. President, the Paducah Sun recently published an editorial expressing appreciation to Bob. I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Paducah Sun, Jan. 17, 2019]

SINCERE APPRECIATION: WORDS OF THANKS FOR LONGTIME ELECTED LEADER BOB LEEPER

(By the Editorial Board)

The inspirational quote was painted on Bob Leeper’s office wall at the McCracken County Courthouse in 2015, shortly after he took over as county judge-executive.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate,” the quote from author Marianne Williamson reads. “Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

The motivational words stayed on that wall all four years, serving as daily affirmation.

“It’s a reminder that we all have purpose and sometimes it’s bigger than we even realized and we kind of have to accept that place that we are in life, and sometimes it’s important you take a stand,” Leeper said.

A case could be made Leeper’s life purpose, or at least one of them, was serving his native Paducah and McCracken County, which he did in his quiet, transparent and dignified way for more than half his life across three offices.

Leeper, 60, served 31 years total—three as a Paducah city commissioner, 24 as a state senator, and a sole four-year term as judge executive.

He did not run for reelection, and turned over the county’s top leadership post to current judge-exec Craig Clymer earlier this month.

Leeper, a chiropractor by trade, is now enjoying his “political retirement,” spending his time treating patients at his clinic, volunteering in the community, and enjoying one of his favorite hobbies—playing tennis.

He doubts very seriously his name will ever appear on another ballot, which is sure to be a healthy change for him but an unfortunate one for the local community.

“Today, I’d say no, I don’t think that’s going to happen,” he said of someday running again for office. “I learned from four years ago that you never say absolutely no, but I don’t have any vision of anything right now.”

Now is the time for us, and we hope area residents, to thank Leeper for all his hard work on the public’s behalf at the local and state levels. He served us honestly and admirably, often eschewing publicity or attention, and with his constituents’ best interests in mind.

Frankly, leaders who put their communities first are rare these days, and Leeper’s presence and influence will be greatly missed.

No one could have blamed Leeper if he's chosen to call it a career back in 2014, when he left the Kentucky General Assembly. However, he stepped up to lead McCracken County, returning much needed stability to an office that had seen turbulence during the previous administration.

"It was an opportunity for us to use some of the contacts I'd made in Frankfort and make things better for the community I grew up in," he said. "It was difficult at times, but we made some positive changes."

His proudest accomplishments as judge-executive, he told *The Sun* this week, were largely centered on infrastructure at the courthouse, jail, road department, and parks. They weren't glamorous, didn't beg for bold headlines or TV spots, but they needed doing.

Leeper's next words are true to his laid-back personality:

"Sometimes you don't get to cut ribbons and that's OK with me," he said. "I was proud this court took that same attitude and we were able to do things that needed to be done, even the kind that you don't cut ribbons on."

"We did it all without raising taxes and I think the county is in a better place from Judge Clymer and the new court."

Join us in congratulating Leeper on a distinguished successful career. Through his leadership, we have a great example for future leaders to emulate.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING DR. LOUIS BALART

• Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, today I want to speak as a Senator and a physician. Many know that I am a doctor, but specifically I am a hepatologist. I studied and treated those with liver disease. One of my colleagues, Dr. Louis Balart, just passed away; a friend who treated many patients with liver disease and made an incredible impact upon the lives of those whom he treated in the State of Louisiana and indeed across the Nation. Dr. Balart has a remarkable story. His family came to the United States from Cuba when he was a child. His father escaped Cuba after his family was sent ahead to the States by drinking blood that he had drained from his own body. He went to the Cuban captors and said, "I'm bleeding internally, I need to go to Miami to get treated." As a doctor himself, he knew that this would happen. With this remarkable story, he was able to rejoin his family that had moved to the United States, fleeing Castro's Cuba. As is the case of many such stories, the family succeeded tremendously, Louis Balart being among them. I mentioned before that he was an influential physician, but he was also a teacher with LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans and Tulane School of Medicine. He also headed the liver transplant unit at the Tulane Medical Center. He passed his gifts down and now his son, Carter Balart, is a gastroenterologist in Baton Rouge, whom I have had the pleasure of working on patients with. Today I honor Dr. Louis Balart, a father, husband, and physician who contributed greatly to his adopted country, the United States of America. He left it richer because of his presence.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BERNADINE REED

• Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, today I want to recognize school bus driver Ms. Bernadine Reed, whose heroic actions ensured the safety of 40 schoolchildren last week in Darlington County, SC.

When a car ran into her stopped school bus on Tuesday, January 22 and caused the bus to catch on fire, Ms. Reed took action to make sure each and every child got off the bus safely and quickly. Because of her leadership and quick action, no one on the bus was injured, although the bus itself was consumed by flames minutes after the crash.

Although Ms. Reed had spent only 45 days on the job, the actions she took in this scary situation ensured the complete safety of all 40 of her schoolchildren. While she insists she is "just a mother," Ms. Reed certainly deserves the title of hero.

I would like to join in the rest of the Darlington community and the State in recognizing her act of heroism and thanking her for assuring the safety of her schoolchildren.●

#### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREENWOOD INDEX-JOURNAL

• Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, today it is my pleasure to honor the Greenwood Index-Journal, a newspaper that is celebrating 100 years in the Greenwood, SC, community.

Founded in February 1919, the Index-Journal started as an office above a movie theatre and a printing press on a dirt floor. Although much has changed 100 years later, the Index-Journal's commitment to keeping the residents of Greenwood informed has not.

The Greenwood Index-Journal remains owned and operated by local residents themselves, with family members of the original co-owners still running the paper today. It is truly a paper run by the people, for the people. The Index-Journal has remained vigilant in its coverage of the Lakelands area, and continues to be a vital part of the Greenwood community.

I congratulate all of the Index-Journal leadership and staff for 100 years of committed and meaningful journalism and look forward to their presence in our State for years to come.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

#### PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER WITH RESPECT TO VENEZUELA THAT TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS WITH RESPECT TO THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13692 ON MARCH 8, 2015—PM 2

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report, which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order with respect to Venezuela that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 of March 8, 2015, and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13808 of August 24, 2017, Executive Order 13827 of March 19, 2018, Executive Order 13835 of May 21, 2018, and Executive Order 13850 of November 1, 2018.

The Executive Order I have issued accounts for the swearing in of a legitimate Interim President of Venezuela, and addresses actions by persons affiliated with the illegitimate Maduro regime, including human rights violations and abuses in response to anti-Maduro protests, arbitrary arrest and detention of anti-Maduro protestors, curtailment of press freedom, harassment of political opponents, and continued attempts to undermine the Interim President of Venezuela and undermine the Venezuelan National Assembly. The Executive Order amends subsection (d) of section 6 of Executive Order 13692, subsection (d) of section 3 of Executive Order 13808, subsection (d) of section 3 of Executive Order 13827, subsection (d) of section 3 of Executive Order 13835, and subsection (d) of section 6 of Executive Order 13850, to read:

"(d) the term "Government of Venezuela" includes the state and Government of Venezuela, any political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof, including the Central Bank of Venezuela and Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), any person owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the foregoing, and any person who has acted or purported to act directly or indirectly for or on behalf of, any of the foregoing, including as a member of the Maduro regime."

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

DONALD J. TRUMP.  
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 25, 2019.