

communities and damaged infrastructure. We spent several days in communication with constituents stranded in Japan that were trying to navigate the treacherous environment, communicate with the State Department, and ultimately obtain transportation home. He was also helpful in working with stranded Alaskan constituents after the 2015 severe earthquake in Nepal. He reached out to the lobbyist for Orbitz, since many of the foreign air carriers on their website raised prices drastically when trying to book flights out of Nepal after the earthquake."

There are so many stories illustrative of Nathan's positive influence here in the U.S. Senate and in Alaska.

I thank Nathan Bergerbest for his service to Alaska and the Nation and wish him well.

TRIBUTE TO FAISAL AMIN

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the work of Mr. Faisal Amin, who has been serving for the past 4 months as a detailee on the staff of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

Faisal is a senior attorney for the Budget and Appropriations Law Group at the U.S. Government Accountability Office and joined the staff in September of this year to fill in for a long-time staff member on maternity leave.

Faisal has been heavily involved in the drafting, consideration, and passage of the fiscal year 2020 Interior appropriations bill starting from the first day of his assignment with the subcommittee. In just 4 months, he participated in almost all of the milestones of the appropriations process: a committee markup, floor consideration, and conference negotiations.

He ably represented Vice Chairman LEAHY and me throughout the process, handling the day-to-day responsibilities of overseeing the budgets of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and related agencies and working with other congressional offices, Agency staff, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that the priorities of Members of this Chamber on both sides of the aisle were well represented.

Faisal did tremendous work, stepping in to handle complicated policy and budgetary issues in an unusually expedited process. He is smart, pragmatic, thoughtful, and strategic—creating an excellent rapport with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle and serving as an optimistic and positive presence on the subcommittee. I am grateful for his time with us, and I know his colleagues on the subcommittee staff—Rachael Taylor, Ryan Hunt and Melissa Zimmerman—feel the same way.

On behalf of Vice Chairman LEAHY and the committee, I also extend our gratitude to the Comptroller General, Mr. Gene Dodaro, and the staff of the U.S. Government Accountability Office

for sharing Faisal with us during this critical time.

Congratulations, Faisal, for a job well done, and thank you for your service to the United States Senate.

TRIBUTE TO GARY HARTZ

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Mr. Gary Hartz, who is retiring from his position at the Indian Health Service with 48 years of distinguished Federal service to the Nation.

Mr. Hartz is especially deserving of this Chamber's recognition because he has spent his entire career on a single and absolutely critical goal—improving access to quality health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives. In his current position, Mr. Hartz serves as the Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering, overseeing the construction, maintenance, and operations of Tribal health facilities, sanitation, and environmental health programs, a position that he has performed for more than two decades after working his way up through ranks of the office. An engineer by trade, Mr. Hartz also served as a member of the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps—retiring with the rank of rear admiral—and served briefly as the agency's Deputy Director. He began his career in the field, working as an engineer on projects in New Mexico and Alaska.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Mr. Hartz in my roles as vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the ranking member of the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. He has worked closely with me and my staff and testified before my committees, and I can say from firsthand experience that he is one of the most knowledgeable, dedicated, and pragmatic public servants at the Indian Health Service, and his wisdom and experience will be deeply missed.

Finally, I want to thank him for all that he has done for my home State of New Mexico. Mr. Hartz has been instrumental in working to improve and replace Tribal health facilities, including working most recently on plans to replace the Service's Albuquerque, Alamo, Pueblo Pintado, and Gallup facilities. While we have more to do, I am tremendously grateful for the work that he has done to improve access to quality health care in Native communities across the State.

On behalf of the Nation, thank you for a job well done, Mr. Hartz. I wish you all the best as you begin your next chapter.

TRIBUTE TO DELIA SCOTT

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Ms. Delia Scott, who is retiring next month with more than 40 years of distinguished Federal service in the executive and legislative branches of government.

I have been lucky enough to work with Delia twice, both when I served in the House of Representatives and in my current role as ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies.

Most recently, Delia has served as the Congressional Liaison Officer at the National Gallery of Art, shaping the Gallery's relationship with members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. I know firsthand that Delia has been an effective advocate for the Gallery, playing an essential role in shepherding its annual appropriations through Congress and securing critical funding increases for operating and infrastructure needs.

Beyond her role with the budget, Delia has made it her goal to connect Members of the House and Senate with the world-class collection at the Gallery so they are invested in its success. My wife, Jill, and I are both grateful to have visited countless times to enjoy and learn about significant paintings, sculpture, photographs, and other works because of Delia's thoughtful invitations. The Gallery won't be the same without her.

For all her impressive work at the Gallery, I also want to recognize her enduring legacy of public service in other positions. Prior to her current position, Delia served as the staff director for the House Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, managing a \$30-plus billion funding bill and working to secure funding for natural resources, environmental protection, and Tribal and cultural programs. She also worked as a professional staff member for the committee and worked for more than two decades at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Delia has devoted her entire career to making sure that Federal agencies and programs—from the arts to environmental protection to foreign assistance—have operated smoothly and received ample funding to benefit the people of this Nation. For that service we should all be grateful.

I congratulate her on a job well done and an outstanding Federal career, and I wish her and her husband, John, the very best as they move on to the next chapter of their lives.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER MICHAEL D. CASSADY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay special tribute to Commander Michael D. Cassady, Medical Service Corps, U.S. Navy. Commander Cassady currently serves as the Program Manager, Naval Advanced Medical Development at the Naval Medical Research Center and will be released from Active Duty after almost 35 years of Active military service on March 1, 2019. Commander Cassady is a native of Millersport, OH, and I am pleased to recognize his distinguished career.

Commander Cassady enlisted in the U.S. Navy on May 21, 1985, and after

completing initial training at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, he earned designation as a hospital corpsman third class. In 1991, Cassady graduated from University of Maryland University College and received a commission on June 8, 1993 as an environmental health officer.

From 1993 to 1999, Cassady completed tours at the U.S. Naval Hospital Keflavik in Iceland and Branch Medical Clinic in Iwakuni, Japan, where he increased the overall readiness and health of hospital staff and improved testing of the base drinking water. In 2001, he deployed to Australia in support of Exercise Tandem Thrust 2001 and later deployed to Thailand in support of Exercise Cobra Gold 2002 to improve combat readiness, combined-joint interoperability, and enhance security relationships between the United States, Thailand, and Singaporean forces. He subsequently served as a medical department and safety inspector for the Board of Inspection and Survey, providing direct support to the fleet; and as chief, medical concept and development, Joint Forces Command, where he furthered joint warfighter capabilities and supported U.S. Northern Command response and relief efforts post Hurricane Katrina.

In 2006, he deployed to Iraq in support of combat operations, where he served as the civil affairs public health section lead, Multi-National Division in Baghdad. Upon returning from Iraq, he served as the assistant officer in charge for the Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Two. Cassady also deployed as the medical planning officer in Expeditionary Strike Group Two and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain, where he was instrumental in coordinating medical plans, guidance, and response to counter piracy and Marine Corps operations, and health service support to the U.S. FIFTH Fleet. His next two tours of duty were as the Environmental Health Officer at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy. During these tours he provided public health oversight and leadership. Commander Cassady reported to his current and final tour of duty in July 2014 at the Naval Medical Research Center in Silver Spring, where he provides program management, leadership, and key administrative direction.

Commander Cassady has spent the entirety of his adult life and over 15 of his 35 years of naval service deployed or stationed overseas in the defense of the United States. Additionally, he holds a master of science in management from Troy State University, a master of public health degree from the Ohio State University, a master of arts in national security and strategy from the Naval War College in 2007, and a master of science in education from Old Dominion University, which he completed in December of 2011.

Mr. President, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, and Commander

Mike Cassady's family and friends in saluting this distinguished officer's many contributions and sacrifices in defense of our great Nation. It is fitting that the Senate today publicly recognizes his service and wishes him, his wife Rohini, and their children, Rhyann, Kassandra, Briana, and David, health, happiness, and success in the years to come.

Congratulations, Commander Cassady, on completing an exemplary career.

TRIBUTE TO YVETTE LEWIS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Yvette Lewis for her excellent service as part of my team in support of the people of Maryland. Yvette has been our director of external relations and community outreach in my Senate office since I began my service in the Senate. In that capacity, she has organized forums throughout Maryland to provide support to our veterans, our senior citizens, and others. Her signature program was organizing consumer protection forums across our State so we could alert Marylanders to the wide array of schemes and scams designed to cheat consumers out of their hard-earned money. She has been deeply committed to the principle that the health of our entire State depends on the success of all our communities.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Yvette for over a decade and am grateful for all her good works in our State and beyond. She is a longtime resident of Bowie, MD, and has worked for years in public service and civic engagement. She has previously worked as the president of the Voter Empowerment Action Project. Moreover, she has also served on the White House Commission for Presidential Scholars. Additionally, she has an accomplished background in music as an opera singer and music teacher in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Montgomery county schools. Yvette is married to Ed Lewis, and they have two children, Shannon and Eric.

Various events have led to a sudden vacancy in the position of the chair of the Maryland Democratic Party. Yvette was the consensus choice as the right person for the job at this moment. While we will miss her on Capitol Hill, I am glad that her enormous talents will also be put to good use in her new role.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING DENISE D'ASCENZO

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Denise D'Ascenzo, the longtime anchor at WFSB Channel 3 Eyewitness News, the CBS station in Hartford, CT. She was a trusted journalist, a devoted mother and wife, and a dear friend. Sadly, Denise passed away suddenly on De-

cember 7, 2019. She will be remembered for her tireless grace, integrity, and humor.

Denise was born Washington, DC, and grew up in Rockville, MD, where she became editor-in-chief of her high school newspaper. She attended Syracuse University, where she got her first break in television at WIXT-TV doing the nightly weather forecast. Also at Syracuse, she met the love of her life and future husband, Wayne. After Syracuse there were stops at television stations in St. Louis and Cleveland, before moving to Connecticut in 1986 to join WFSB.

In Connecticut, she provided special coverage of political conventions, the U.S. visit of Pope John the II, 9/11, the arrest of the DC sniper, and the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Denise had a passion for health and medical reporting, taking viewers inside operating rooms, cardiac catheterization labs, and neonatal intensive care units, as well as onboard Life Star, the critical care helicopter service. She was a leading voice in raising awareness for conditions such as breast cancer, heart disease, obesity, and preventive healthcare.

During her 33 year career at WFSB, she was honored with 2 Edward R. Murrow Awards, 7 Associated Press Awards, 11 Emmy's, and a national Gabriel Award. She was recognized for her work with a number of charities, including the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Mary's Place, and the Channel 3 Kids Camp. In 2013, Denise was elected to the Silver Circle by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for her significant contributions to broadcasting. In 2015, she became the first woman to be inducted into the Connecticut Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame.

Connecticut has lost a broadcasting legend. We all also lost a dear friend who came into our homes with dignity and decency to tell them the news of the day. She was deeply dedicated to uncovering and conveying the truth of every story. She was there for almost 30 years to guide us through tragedy and triumph, and we miss her immensely.

My wife, Cynthia, and I extend our deepest sympathies to Denise's family during this difficult time, particularly to her husband, daughter, and coworkers. May their many wonderful memories of Denise provide them solace and comfort in the days ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO DAN FREEDMAN

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dan Freedman on the occasion of his retirement. Throughout his impressive 32 years as a correspondent in the Hearst Washington Bureau, Dan set an example of tireless, honest reporting. He undertook the monumental task of covering the Connecticut and New York delegations with rigor and expertise. Even as the media environment grows more