

As we celebrate my dad's 100th birthday, I want to say thank you to you for the example of faith, integrity, character, and humility that you have given to me and to Bob and to Rich and to Karen and to Tim. Thank you for faithfully serving God's purpose for your generation and happy 100th birthday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM
EBELTOFT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, we have had a fruitful day here today. We passed a lot of bills. We did it in a bipartisan way. I want to thank both Leader McCONNELL and Leader SCHUMER for their good work, as well as Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member LEAHY for their good work on these bills.

Today, I am going to do something that I have never done before. I am going to read an obituary about a man I don't believe I have ever met, even though I was in the Veterans' Home of Columbia Falls while he was there. This obituary was passed on to me by my wife, who got it from a friend. It is incredibly powerful because, quite frankly, it is about one man, but it is actually about a generation of men and women who served in Vietnam.

This guy's name was William Ebeltoft. The obituary goes like this:

"Not everyone who lost his life in Vietnam died there." The saying is true for CW2 William C. Ebeltoft. He died on December 15, 2019, at the Veteran's Home in Columbia Falls, Montana. He died 50 years after he lost, in Vietnam, all that underpinned his life. He was 73 years old.

Everyone called him "Bill." He was loved by the nursing staff who cared for him. He was loved by the fellow veterans with whom he lived; those he helped when he was able and entertained with funny German slang and a stint at the piano when he could. He was a virtuoso when playing "Waltzing Milda."

His small family loved him dearly. He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Mary Ebeltoft of Dickinson, North Dakota, whose devotion and care for their war-damaged boy was strong and unfailing. He is survived by his brother, Paul Ebeltoft, and the one he loved as the sister he never had, Paul's wife, Gail. . . . It is difficult to write about Bill. He lived three lives: before, during and after Vietnam. Before Vietnam, Bill was a handsome man, who wore clothing well; a man with white, straight teeth that showed in his ready smile. A state champion trap shooter, a low handicap golfer, a 218-average bowler, a man of quick, earthy wit, with a fondness for children, old men, hunting, fast cars, and a cold Schlitz. He told jokes well.

During Vietnam, he lived with horrors of which he would only seldom speak. Slow Motion Four, Bill's personal call sign, logged thousands of helicopter flight hours performing Forward Support Base resupply landings, medical evacuations, exfiltrations and gunship runs. We know of him there mostly through medals for valor he received, and these were many. . . . While attempting to resupply B Company, [Warrant Officer]

Ebeltoft's co-pilot became wounded. Realizing the importance of the mission WO Ebeltoft elected to attempt completion of the mission. Due to his superior knowledge of the aircraft, the helicopter was kept under control during the period in which the pilot was wounded and the ship was under fire. Remaining under attack from automatic weapons fire, the supply mission was successfully completed. While unloading the supplies, WO Ebeltoft received word that there were five emergency medical evacuation cases located 200 meters to his rear. WO Ebeltoft re-positioned his helicopter and picked up the wounded personnel. While evacuating the wounded, the commanding officer of Company B was injured. WO Ebeltoft again maneuvered his aircraft to enable evacuation of the injured officer. WO Ebeltoft then proceeded to evacuate all injured personnel by the fastest possible means. Upon completion, examination of the aircraft revealed that the aircraft had sustained nine enemy .30 caliber hits.

Bill got the medal, of course, but he would have been the last to say anything about it. The citation shows the type of man that he, and many of his brothers-in-arms in Vietnam were; and still are today, albeit battered hard and unfairly by the cruel winds of the time in which they fought.

After being discharged as a decorated hero, Bill had a rough re-entry into civilian life. It is not necessary to recount Bill's portion of what is an all-too-common story for wartime veterans, particularly those of the Vietnam era. It may be sufficient to say that after a run at business, a marriage and while grappling daily with his demons, his mental faculties escaped him. Bill became a resident of the Veteran's Home in Columbia Falls, Montana in 1994. He lived there for the next 26 years.

At the Home, the patina of his memory covered life's sorrows, and it was a blessing. Bill was happy there, living a life that was a strange mixture of hunting stories, pickup trucks and memories of some of his better times with women, friends and the outdoor life. Bill denied that anyone he loved had died; could not understand why anyone would fill with gas at four bucks a gallon when "Johnny's Standard sells it for 27 cents;" and still "drove" his 1968 Dodge Charger. He was unfailingly courteous. His largest concerns were making his smoke breaks and finding his wallet (a search of 26 years.)

In the past year, Bill's shaky grip on physical health also slipped through his fingers. Yet, despite this, what we loved in him remained, if only sometimes as a shadow. Even after his serious decline, suffering fractures because of falls, Bill would tell the staff that he was "just fine" and not to worry about him. Thin, hunched over, propelling himself with one foot, he would wheel himself into the room of a bed-ridden veteran and sit there, next to the bed, unspeaking. The nursing staff was certain that Bill thought that the man in bed was lonely and needed company.

Bill was always a proud man, remembering himself as he was in 1969, not as he became. Who are we to suggest differently? His was not a life that many would wish for, but in some ways, Bill was a lucky man. He was surrounded to the end by staff who enjoyed and respected him. He had a chance to be helpful to others who were doing less well than he. And the passing of the seasons never diminished his plans for another elk hunt or to "see that beautiful girl again this weekend."

When a small slice of reality penetrated his pleasant confusion, Bill struggled to understand why he was where he was. Prematurely aged, his worldly goods in a small

dresser, not knowing who the President might be or remembering why he should care, Bill's losses were greater than most of us could endure. Yet, to those who love him, his brother and his brother's wife, and their sons, he will always be a brave, accomplished man, more generous than was wise, more trusting than was safe.

It is not possible to wrap your arms around a loved one who leaves. But it is possible to wrap your heart around a memory. Bill's will be well taken care of.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA
TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am here on the floor again for the third time in 3 weeks to talk about the U.S.-Mexico agreement, USMCA.

Just a few moments ago, this trade agreement passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 385 to 41. That is extraordinary. Trade agreements sometimes tend to be pretty controversial and, more recently in our history, pretty partisan. In this case, Republicans and Democrats alike helped negotiate a good agreement, and Republicans and Democrats alike supported it.

Let's now get that agreement over here. Let's not wait. The people in Ohio and all around in country who are going to benefit from it need those benefits now.

So I am very pleased that the President and his U.S. Trade Representative, Bob Lighthizer, patiently negotiated with Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats and were able to get something done, and now it is close to becoming the law of the land. All it needs is a vote over here from the Senate and then the President will sign it into law.

Thanks to important measures designed to strengthen our economy, create more jobs, and increase market access, this new agreement, the USMCA, actually helps to level the playing field between the United States and Canada and Mexico.

First of all, it is going to result in more jobs. The independent International Trade Commission has said over 170,000 new jobs. That is mid-range. It could be a lot more than that.

But they have also said that these are good-paying jobs. Jobs in trade tend to pay about 15 percent higher on average, and they have better benefits. So this is a bunch of good jobs.

By the way, they estimate that at least 20,000 jobs in the auto industry will come to the United States that would not have come otherwise. I come from Ohio, a big auto State. It is a State that cares a lot about manufacturing and, specifically, autos, and they are both going to be helped by this agreement.

Part of the way that it is going to create jobs here is by leveling the playing field on labor standards and enforcing those standards.

Also, it has higher content requirements for U.S.-made steel and intra-

auto parts that go into an automobile. As an example, USMCA requires that 70 percent of the steel going into cars come from North America. There is no provision like that in the status quo, in the NAFTA agreement. So this is a big improvement for us to drive more jobs here in America with regard to the steel production that goes into automobiles.

But, second, it says that 75 percent of the overall content in USMCA automobiles that are sold through this agreement have to be from North America. That is a big jump. In the current agreement, instead of 75 percent, NAFTA has 62.5 percent.

What does that mean? It means that if you make a car, say, in Mexico, and it has a bunch of parts in it that come from other countries, say, Japan or China or Germany, they can't take advantage of the USMCA's lower tariffs unless they have at least 75 percent North American content. So that is a big difference.

Now, there are some, including on my side of the aisle, that have criticized this provision and said that somehow this is a protectionist provision. Let me just make this point. We are agreeing with Canada and Mexico that we are going to have a new agreement with them that lowers barriers, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers on our borders with Canada and Mexico. We are taking advantage of that, with each other trading back and forth. That is why we will have more trade. That is why we will have more jobs.

If other countries want to take advantage of that by coming into Mexico or Canada and adding parts to the cars, they are free riders because they are not giving us the reciprocal access to their markets as Canada and Mexico are. That is why I think this agreement makes sense.

Now, I think it will incentivize two things. One, it will incentivize more jobs here—auto jobs, manufacturing jobs, steel jobs. But, second, it will incentivize those other countries to enter into a trade agreement with us.

We have talked about this with Japan. We have taken the first step in starting to put together what is considered a broader free trade agreement. I hope we get to one. It would be important.

But if they can simply free ride on existing agreements by having their stuff be transshipped from another country into the United States to take advantage of the lower tariffs that we are providing to Canada and Mexico, they wouldn't have that incentive to trade with us with their own agreement. So I think this is a good thing for encouraging more trade agreements and more trade openness.

The International Trade Commission also tells us that the USMCA is going to grow our economy. In fact, they say it is going to grow our economy by double the gross domestic product of that which was projected under the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Some may remember that agreement, the TPP.

Many of my colleagues, particularly on the other side of the aisle, held that agreement up as one that would have been great for America and that we should be part of it. I think it is important that we trade with our neighbors in Latin America and in the Pacific Rim, but, frankly, that agreement that was touted as being so great had less than half of the economic growth that we are talking about here. So this has more than doubled the economic growth we saw in the TPP.

Second, the USMCA means new rules of the road for online sales. This is really important. So much of our economy today and our commerce takes place online, and yet there is nothing in NAFTA on it. If you think about it, 25 years ago there was no significant online commerce, and so there is nothing in the agreement. Whereas, in this agreement, there are a few things that are very important.

For my State of Ohio and, really, for our entire country, a lot of our commerce is done online now. We have a lot of small businesses engaged in it. They want to do business with Mexico and Canada, but they have no protections—no protections from tariffs. They can be assessed on that trade. This says no tariffs.

Also, data localization is something some countries are doing to American online companies. So if you are in online commerce in America, another country may say: Do you know what? You can do business in our country only if you localize your data, meaning the servers have to be in our country—in Mexico or in Canada, as an example.

This agreement says no. It prohibits that data localization requirement, which allows us to sell more to those countries without having to place our servers there.

It also says that the de minimis level on customs duties for sales online is increased. This saves money because people can now be involved in commerce with Canada and Mexico and not pay as much in terms of the customs duties and the tariffs, but there are also incredible administrative burdens being lifted by not having to worry about that. So this is good for us because we do a lot of online commerce here.

Third, I would say that American farmers are strongly behind this agreement for a good reason, which is that it opens up more markets for them and adds more certainty for them. Again, the NAFTA accord is 25 years old, and we had hoped during the last 25 years that we would get at some of the protectionist policies, particularly with regard to Canada and with regard to dairy and wheat and other issues, but we didn't have much success until now. Now, with the USMCA, we have the ability to send more of our stuff to these countries, and that is why the ag community is so excited about it. Between bad weather, low prices, and a shrinking China market, our farmers have been hit hard, and this is a light at the end of the tunnel. That is why,

by the way, over 1,000 farm groups have come out in support of USMCA.

There are a lot of folks I hear talking who say one side won or one side lost in the negotiations over USMCA. I don't think that is it. I think because of the hard work of U.S. Trade Representative Bob Lighthizer and the Trump administration and President Trump himself supporting this and pushing it, I think neither side won but the American people won. And isn't that nice to see? I think that is why you saw today on the floor of the House of Representatives a vote of 385 to 41.

I think now more people are going to be able to benefit from trade with these two countries. For Ohio, Canada is, by far, our largest trading partner. Mexico is No. 2. So this is a big deal. It is more modernized trade. We have replaced an agreement that has shown its age with unenforceable labor standards and environmental standards, non-existent digital economy provisions, and outdated rules-of-origin provisions. This changes all that.

We waited long enough. It is time, now that the House has voted—as I said, this evening, which was great news—to get that legislation over here to ensure that we do have great victory for American farmers, for small businesses, for our manufacturers, for our online businesses, and so many others.

I look forward to the opportunity to be able to vote for it over here.

COMBATING METH AND COCAINE ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I would also like to talk for a moment about the legislation we just passed on the appropriations side.

There were two bills. One focused more on the national security and defense side. There are a lot of good things in there for Ohio, including the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and also for the Lima Tank Plant. Also, much more importantly, it is good for our military—for our men and women in uniform, who are on the frontlines every day, sacrificing for us.

We have shown through this legislation we just passed that we appreciate them. There is not only a pay raise, but also we are providing them the equipment and the modern technology they need to be able to be successful.

But I also noticed in the agreement that just passed, the first appropriations bill, that there is really important language with regard to the drug crisis that we face in this country.

I see my colleague SHELDON WHITEHOUSE is on the floor. I have worked with him over the years on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Now we have a CARA 2.0 bill that we would like to see passed.

But the bottom line is that this House and Senate and President Obama and now President Trump have begun to address this problem in different ways over the last 3 or 4 years, and it is beginning to work. We are finally beginning to see, with regard to the opioid crisis, some success.