

indicate, use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices is epidemic in our middle schools and our high schools. It is dangerous to the physical and mental health of our children. That is something you would think we would be able to address. If we are going to turn the tide on e-cigarettes and prevent more young people from facing their deadly health consequences, passage of this legislation is a necessary first step.

#### STATE WORK PERIOD

Madam President, when I was home in San Antonio, I was able to help celebrate the investiture of one of our newest Federal judges, Jason Pulliam, who filled the vacancy in the Western District of Texas. Then I got to spend a little time in Midland with folks and talk about the importance of our oil and gas industry and why innovation in that space and concern about conservation and the environment were not mutually exclusive.

At each step along the way, I was able to hear from countless other Texans about changes they would like to see coming out of Washington. They encouraged us to try to work together and avoid some of the partisan gridlock we have seen that characterized so much of the recent impeachment proceedings. It was a great week recharging at home. I came back ready to get back to work.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VETERANS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, the Disabled American Veterans is celebrating 100 years of helping military veterans, and I rise to recognize this remarkable occasion.

Throughout its history, the DAV has been influential in identifying ways to best support our veterans—from pushing for the consolidation of veterans programs, in its early years, to direct outreach to veterans in communities with the launch of the Field Service Unit Program, to pressing for more funding for VA healthcare and benefits.

There has been so much progress in advancing veterans services thanks to the DAV's efforts. The organization's members and partners have a lot to be proud of. DAV members have been leading advocates for injured and ill veterans and their families, which has made a difference for countless wounded warriors. The DAV's advocacy has helped and continues to build better lives for disabled veterans. We are thankful for the more than 1 million DAV members and auxiliary members who are doing great work to ensure our country keeps the promise we made to the men and women who have served in uniform.

This week, members of the DAV Department of Arkansas are visiting the Nation's Capital to share the organization's legislative priorities for 2020. They are part of an extensive network that has been influential in identifying how the Department of Veterans Affairs can strengthen its services. They are among the DAV members from across the country who are in Washington, DC, to advocate on behalf of veterans.

There is simply no substitute for coming to our Nation's Capital and visiting with Members of Congress to let them know of DAV's priorities. These include strengthening veterans mental healthcare and suicide prevention programs, improving benefits and services for women veterans and ensuring veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances receive full and timely benefits. The good news is we are working on these priorities because we all agree that our veterans deserve nothing less than quality care and the benefits they have earned.

Last month, the Senate's Committee on Veterans' Affairs advanced the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. This comprehensive legislation will strengthen our ability to provide veterans with the mental healthcare they need. It includes language Senator WARNER and I authored to leverage the services of veteran-serving nonprofits and other community networks in our overall strategy to reduce veteran suicides.

VA Ranking Member TESTER and I are also working to improve services to our women veterans. Our Deborah Sampson Act legislation would eliminate barriers to care and services that many women veterans face and would help to ensure the VA could address the needs for women, which is so critical because they are more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, and to go without needed healthcare. We are pleased to have the support of the DAV for this important legislation.

I am proud to cosponsor the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act, which would allow veterans who suffer from the effects of burn pits to get the benefits and services they have earned.

I encourage my colleagues to support these bills so we can provide the resources that have been promised to our veterans.

For years, the DAV members have supported the passage of the Blue Water Navy bill. Thanks, in part, to their advocacy, Congress approved this critical legislation last year that extends benefits to more veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals during the Vietnam war.

The DAV's attention extends beyond the Halls of Congress. Its National Service Program helps to direct services to veterans across the country.

I applaud the efforts of the more than 11,000 DAV members in Arkansas whose outreach is helping veterans to understand and access their benefits. They

have spent countless hours in advising fellow veterans about the assistance they qualify for and in helping them fill out the paperwork to secure those benefits through the VA.

One of the well-known services provided by the DAV is the transportation of veterans to VA medical centers and hospitals. In rural States like Arkansas, the services these volunteers offer is critical to meeting veterans' healthcare needs. The Arkansas fleet is made up of 16 vans. Last year, more than 6,600 veterans were driven to medical appointments with the help of volunteers who logged more than 18,000 hours behind the wheel.

I look forward to continuing to work with DAV members as Congress crafts and reforms policies to improve services for veterans and their families.

This country made a promise to our veterans that we must live up to, and I am proud to join with the DAV to ensure we follow through on that commitment. In working together, we can find solutions and take action to deliver the results veterans have earned and expect. We will continue looking to the DAV to understand how we can improve the lives of the men and women who have served in uniform.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and as chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that oversees VA funding, I have seen the dedication of the DAV to support disabled veterans in Arkansas and across the country. I am proud to recognize the DAV on its 100 years of engaging veterans, in its advocating to advance benefits, services, and care, and in its making a positive difference in the lives of veterans and their families.

#### REMEMBERING CHARLES PORTIS

Madam President, on a separate subject, I also pay tribute to an Arkansas veteran who is one of the State's most famous sons—literary icon Charles Portis. Mr. Portis, the author best known for his 1968 Western novel "True Grit," passed away on February 17, 2020.

Born in December 1933, in El Dorado, AR, Portis spent his childhood in southern Arkansas. He enlisted in the Marine Corps and served as an infantryman and, during the Korean war, reached the rank of sergeant before his discharge in 1955. Following his military service, he attended the University of Arkansas and wrote for the student newspaper, the Arkansas Traveler. He graduated from the university in 1958 with a degree in journalism.

After graduating, Portis began his career as a reporter. He first worked at the Arkansas Gazette and then at the New York Herald Tribune. Though he voluntarily ended his journalism career in 1964, he used the skills and tools he had acquired as a reporter when he returned home to Arkansas to begin writing fiction.

His most celebrated work is the Western classic "True Grit." This book chronicles the efforts of a Yell County

teenager, Mattie Ross, along with U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn, to avenge the death of Mattie's father at the hands of a drifter. The novel incorporates distinct references that are familiar to many Arkansans, and it depicts life on the frontier in what was then the wild, wild West. It was later adapted into film in 1969 and 2010. While it is his most well-known work, Mr. Portis also wrote four other novels and several shorter works of fiction and nonfiction.

During his career, Portis was honored with the Oxford American's first Lifetime Achievement in Southern Literature award and was presented with the Porter Prize's 30th Anniversary Lifetime Achievement Award. "True Grit" has been praised as "one of the great American novels."

I take this opportunity to say how proud we are of Charles Portis and his legacy as an acclaimed writer and storyteller. My thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family as they remember and reflect on his life. I hope they find comfort in the fact that Mr. Portis has left a profound, lasting mark on Arkansas, as well as within our Nation's culture and literary traditions.

Charles Portis had a remarkable career that will be remembered for a long time to come. I wish to honor him and his loved ones today and help to celebrate his life. On behalf of all Arkansans, we celebrate Charles Portis and his notable contributions to our State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am pleased to have arrived on the Senate floor just a bit early to have heard the Senator from Arkansas, Mr. BOOZMAN, pay tribute to the DAV, Disabled American Veterans, and I very much want to join in his comments.

I will also take a moment to thank him for his continual service for veterans, not only for those of Arkansas but of our Nation, and to recognize that he and I, since our days in the House of Representatives, have worked together on veterans' issues and both now find ourselves in positions in the hopes that we can do even more.

To Senator BOOZMAN, I say thank you for his continued efforts in making sure that all who serve our Nation have a better future and that the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the American people, do everything they can to make sure that what they are entitled to they will receive. So I thank the Senator from Arkansas.

TRIBUTE TO KENT CORNISH

Madam President, I come to the floor to congratulate and pay tribute to a Kansan, Kent Cornish. He is retiring as the President of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters.

He has spent the last 40 years in the broadcast business and the past 12 at the KAB in his advocating on behalf of broadcasters across our State. His dedication to making certain that rural

communities in Kansas have access to quality broadcasting programming is a testament to his commitment to rural America at large. I, in particular, find that very pleasing as we know how important broadcasting is—local broadcasting in particular—to the future and well-being of the citizens of Kansas and, particularly, to those who live in our smallest communities.

Kent is widely recognized as one of the most knowledgeable and effective advocates for broadcasting in our State and around the country. He has been a leading voice in Topeka and Washington, DC, and is someone whom I hold in high regard.

Kent is a native of Topeka who dedicated his life to broadcasting at an early age. With dreams of becoming a sportscaster, Kent attended the University of Kansas, where he earned a degree in journalism. He later attended Washburn University School of Law.

After joining his hometown station, WIBW, as an intern, Kent worked his way up through the ranks to become a news reporter, anchor, and, eventually, an assistant news director. He also spent time at WDAF in Kansas City and later returned to WIBW. He left the station in 1980 and turned his attention to sales. He served as executive director of the Kansas Manufactured Housing Institute, but he could not keep his passions in the background.

He left that job to return to broadcasting. Four years after leaving WIBW, he rejoined the station at which he would ultimately be named program director and operations manager. He later took over as general manager of KTKA, in Topeka, and eventually moved to Wichita to manage two television stations. After having spent decades running broadcast stations that Kansans from all over our State have relied on for both local and national news, he became the president and executive director of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters in 2008.

Kent has had a long and successful career. He has earned esteemed awards, including the Grover Cobb Award from the University of Kansas. He has also served in numerous leadership capacities, including as the former president of the National Alliance of State Broadcasters Associations and as the former chairman of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce and of the Topeka Community Foundation.

Kent has been a powerful voice in the Nation's Capital for critical Federal policy, all framed in the larger lens of improving communities' access—people's access—to quality broadcasting. Like the rest of us from rural States like Kansas, Kent knows how quickly these communities can be forgotten and has always been determined to ensure access to local information, news, and weather.

I am proud to call Kent a friend, and I look forward to seeing where his life now takes him. We meet many people in the business that we are in here in the U.S. Senate and in politics in gen-

eral. Kent is one of those whom you appreciate from the first day you become acquainted with him. He is straightforward and honest and tells it like it is. He is there to be supportive but is there to provide the necessary information for me and others to make the best decisions, not just on behalf of broadcasters but for those they serve in their communities.

I add my voice to the well-deserved praise that he has received and will continue to receive. Congratulations and thank you to Kent for all his work.

On behalf of Kansas broadcasters, you are highly regarded by them and their listeners. Your efforts have benefited Kansans and have improved our Nation. You will be missed at the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, but I have no doubt you will continue to make your community a better place.

I look forward to many more years of friendship and working together on behalf of Kansans, and I thank you for your friendship and for all you have done to make our State a better place.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The Senator from Arkansas.

ABORTION

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, this week the Senate has another chance to vote on basic pro-life protections for babies, both born and unborn.

This week we have another choice to live up to our Nation's highest principle—that every person has the right to life—or to stoop down to a narrow vision of humanity peddled by the abortion industry and its cronies.

The first bill we are considering—the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act—would prohibit abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, when there is clear, scientific evidence that these young babies can feel pain in their mother's womb.

The abortion lobby and all of its defenders will dispute this science, claiming that babies or fetuses—which is the euphemism they like to use for babies—can't feel pain at all or at least until the very latest stages of pregnancy. Anyone peddling that myth must have never visited a neonatal intensive care unit, or the NICU, as they are usually called. Ask any one of those NICU nurses who cares for little preemies, even micro-preemies, and they will tell you how they can hold that small infant sometimes even in the palm of their hands, and they can see it grimace at a poke or a prod, maybe even slap away a tube or a needle as they approach—just as older kids do, just as some grownups do.

The undeniable fact of fetal pain in these young babies influences every aspect of how we care for the young in our hospitals. We swaddle them with only the softest fabrics because their little bodies are so easily stimulated. We give them pain medicine during surgery, whether they are in the womb