

us now, and it is finally addressed in this agreement, as well as how we are going to handle digital services and digital trade.

There is something very important to my State, and that is agricultural trade and how agricultural goods are going to move. Now, the vast majority of this USMCA agreement lines up exactly with the NAFTA of the past, but there are some areas that were problems in the NAFTA of the past that had to be addressed, one of those being wheat, for instance.

When wheat moved from the United States into Canada, Canada downgraded that wheat to a lower grade so that our Oklahoma farmers would get less profit for that because they downgraded that wheat as it moved across the Canadian border. This agreement settles that issue. That was just Canadian protectionism. It wasn't that the wheat was of a lesser quality; it was just that they were trying to protect Canadian wheat instead of having an actual free market.

This is a free trade area. The tariffs and the fees go away across North America if we can have a level playing field. In areas in which we don't have a level playing field, like with Oklahoma wheat competing with Canada's wheat, we are taking that on. I feel confident that Oklahoma wheat is going to win that fight, and given this new trade agreement, we get the opportunity to win that.

There are lots of areas in the agreement that help us in agriculture. There are areas in digital trade and intellectual property, as well as in multiple other areas of manufacturing. That is why so many groups and so many individuals have looked at this and have gone back to the Trump administration, with some of my Democratic colleagues begrudgingly swallowing hard and saying: This is a good agreement for America in the future. This does help us keep jobs here. This helps us continue to have a level playing field for trade.

I congratulate the Trump administration for its 2½ long years of very hard work to get to this agreement. I am grateful that we are nearing an agreement with China, a phase No. 1 agreement. It is much needed because China has been a major problem in intellectual property theft and in its having an unfair trading platform. I am grateful the administration has also completed the first stage of a major, new trade agreement with Japan. Those are our four largest trading partners, and it is significant to our economy not just in the short term but in the long term that we continue to have stable free trade areas in as many places as we can.

I am confident in the American worker. When given the opportunity to compete, we win because of the quality of our work, the quantity of our work, and the creativity of the inventions we put out from this country. Let's keep doing that. Let's keep winning around the world in our trade agreements.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO DOUG AND APRIL MOORE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is the end of the week here, a Thursday at least, on the Senate floor, and it is that time of the week that I usually come down and talk about somebody who is making my State such a great place to live in, somebody who is doing great things for their community, somebody I refer to as a group or individuals as our Alaskan of the Week.

So this is kind of exciting. The pages usually see this as the most exciting speech of the week because they learn about Alaska.

This is our first Alaskan of the Week of the year. I am sure the Presiding Officer is even excited about that. It is actually the first one of the whole decade, so stand by.

Now, usually I give these speeches and talk a little bit and update about what is going on in Alaska.

I just spent a glorious holiday, New Year's, Christmas in Anchorage and Fairbanks over the last couple weeks.

We passed the winter solstice. That is the shortest day of the year. Now, it might not feel like that in Alaska, but actually the days are getting longer, getting more sunlight, but the cold has hit, winter has come.

In Anchorage, our largest city, my hometown, temperatures just last weekend when I was home were dropping into the 15-below-zero range. In the interior of Alaska—that is a little more north—it hit 65 below zero in Manley Hot Springs on December 27. That rivals the winter temperature on Mars. OK? It is cold.

I was in Fairbanks. That is part of the interior, beautiful Fairbanks, where it has been close to 40 below the last couple weeks. I went out and took a run. I am not sure I realized it was that cold. It was only about 20 below on my run. It was kind of cold, but it was still a nice run. We have a lot of folks who get out and enjoy the beautiful winter, beautiful temperatures.

I mentioned in the interior—the elementary school in Nenana recently posted that they were going to cancel school if it hit 55 below zero.

So these are tough people, especially having just witnessed Washington, DC, close the whole darn city because they had a half inch of snow, but I am digressing here.

We live in extremes in Alaska, but, for many of us, that is exactly why we live in Alaska. Toughing out these extreme temperatures together certainly makes us closer, brings communities together, makes people rely on each other. We are a huge State geographically, but a small, tight-knit State in terms of population, and we get through things like these tough winters, really cold winters, by gathering together in small and large places all across the State, places of warmth, particularly when it is cold outside.

So today I would like to recognize an Alaskan couple who has provided one

of those places of warmth for the community of Talkeetna and the surrounding areas. Talkeetna is about 100 miles north of Anchorage. It is a must-visit stop when you come to Alaska. Why? Well, it is absolutely beautiful. It is the gateway to Denali National Park, and if you would like to take a flightseeing tour of Denali, it almost certainly is going to take off in Talkeetna.

So I encourage everybody who is watching here in the Gallery or on TV, you have to come to Alaska. You have to visit—winter, summer, fall, spring, it doesn't matter. You will have the best trip of a lifetime. Go to Talkeetna.

It is also a unique town in many ways—Alaska unique. It was the model for the TV show, many years ago, "Northern Exposure." Its honorary member for 10 years was a cat named Stubbs. So you get the picture. It is a town filled with generous and warm people who love their State, their communities, their country.

Our Alaskans of the Week today are Doug and April Moore. They are the owners of an iconic store in Talkeetna, Moores' Hardware and Building Supply. It is a hardware store with a heart and a place for the community to gather, particularly in the winter, and it is a place that the Moores run to reflect the value of families and communities that they hold so dear.

So let me tell you a little bit about the Moores. Doug's parents and his brother moved from Anchorage to Talkeetna in 1981, when Doug was a preteen and his parents wanted to live in a smaller community, smaller than Anchorage, and they wanted to own their own business. So they chose a tool store housed in a Quonset hut. Like many small business owners all across Alaska, all across America, they got to work—hard work, long hours, but that is what they did.

The younger Moores worked at the store when they were growing up, but Doug chose to be a surveyor when he was in college, and eventually he ran into April, his wife, at a restaurant in Talkeetna. Because it is a small town, they knew each other. They had grown up just a quarter mile apart, but things clicked at that restaurant.

After they got married, Doug and April decided they wanted to run the family business, the hardware store, and they wanted it to stay in the family.

Fast forward to now. If you live in Talkeetna, and you want to build a house, you want to make repairs, you need a hammer, a nail, or just for a cup of coffee, their store is more than 10,000 square feet, with a staff of about 20, with more in the summer. The staff loves the place. They love the Moores because they are great people, great owners, dedicated owners.

Here is how one employee describes working for them:

You will never find anyone like them anywhere.

Another said:

They are amazing people, what they do to us personally—they take care of us. They make sure we are taken care of. If we have family issues, they understand and do everything they can to help.

Doug recently said:

We're a family-oriented business. The families of the people who work for us are very important. The kids of our employees have grown up in the business.

Both of their parents have been together for 50 years, and Doug and April have been together 25. These are really important milestones, really important examples.

As Doug said, "We really believe that's one of the big problems with America right now—families not staying together. We live our values."

The Moores are also heavily involved in the community. April was a Girl Scout leader and a PTA member. Doug was the president of the community council, a volunteer emergency medical technician, a volunteer firefighter. They help on Thanksgiving with the food bank, as well as the local gun club and firing range. They give where they can. They give back to the community. They are integrated in the community.

Last summer, a series of wildfires ravaged through Southcentral Alaska. The most destructive of these fires was the 3,700-acre McKinley fire. It destroyed 51 homes, 3 businesses, and 84 outbuildings. Thank God, nobody in Alaska was killed.

As one of the largest hardware stores servicing that region where that fire was, Moores' Hardware and Building Supply stepped up, donating time, equipment, and giving to people who needed help, people who needed to rebuild.

We often talk about how small businesses are the backbone of our country's economy, but here is the thing. They are also the backbone of our communities.

In small towns throughout America or throughout Alaska, businesses are not just places for people to go and shop for things. They can also be places where people get together, where people give to one another.

In fact, they are often the glue that holds communities together. This is what Moores' Hardware and Building Supply is. I have had the honor of going there, shopping there, seeing this great store and community in action.

Now, one of the Moores' sons, Justin, is in training to take over the store when Doug and April finally retire. It will then be an official third-generation small business in the great State of Alaska. What a great accomplishment that will be.

Justin is committed, just like Doug and April, to their employees and their communities. So I want to thank the Moores. In fact, I want to thank all small business owners across Alaska and across the country for your hard work.

Doug and April, thank you not just for that hard work but for all you are doing for the community of Talkeetna

and the surrounding areas and for the great State of Alaska.

Congratulations on being our first Alaskan of the Week of 2020.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 3:32 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:28 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 541, 542 and 552.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Cynthia L. Attwood, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for a term expiring April 27, 2025 (Reappointment); Amanda Wood Laihow, of Maine, to be a Member of Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for the remainder of a term expiring April 27, 2023; and Crosby Kemper III, of Missouri, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years, en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Attwood, Laihow, and Kemper, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. 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 CARTER HENDRICKS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as my good friend Carter Hendricks prepares to end his service as the mayor of Hopkinsville, he certainly has a lot to show for his years of leadership in Southwestern Kentucky. He has helped the region take full advantage of its great potential, and I know I join his friends and constituents in expressing our gratitude. Today, I would like to honor this remarkable Kentuckian and wish him well as he embarks on his next chapter.

When he was first elected in 2014, Carter made headlines for becoming the second youngest mayor in Hopkinsville's two centuries of history. The local newspaper, the highly regarded Kentucky New Era, also reported that Carter was only the city's second Republican mayor. He quickly mobilized the city's administration with a bold strategy to make Hopkinsville an attractive destination for economic development. His flagship initiative, called "Hoptown WINS," was a nearly \$15 million capital campaign involving downtown improvements, as well as new parks, a sports complex, and a visitors center. These state-of-the-art amenities are meant to help draw investment and good jobs into Hopkinsville and the surrounding areas. Now halfway through his second term, Carter and his constituents are beginning to see the positive results of his leadership. His vision of Hopkinsville's bright future is helping to create the conditions for growth and prosperity.

Carter had been encouraging economic growth in the region long before he first stepped foot into the mayor's office. For nearly a decade, Carter worked in senior positions at the Christian County Chamber of Commerce, including 4 years as its president and CEO. With local leaders and the business community, he helped develop creative solutions to the county's challenges.

I have had the great privilege to work with Carter in both of these capacities. When I heard the area's lack of access to a Federal interstate was obstructing business investment, Carter and I teamed up to find a solution. In 2017, Senator RAND PAUL and I secured the designation of a nearby section of the Edward T. Breathitt Pennyrite Parkway as Interstate 169. When President Trump signed our provision into law, he helped connect Christian County to the Federal interstate system and bolstered Carter's efforts to encourage growth in the area.

We also partnered to support the brave men and women stationed at Fort Campbell in Christian County. The installation is part of Kentucky's critical role in our national defense structure, and the local community takes seriously its responsibility to support Fort Campbell's mission and the servicemembers stationed there. During his time with the chamber, Carter led the business community's efforts to be strong and supportive neighbors. Together, we wanted to welcome