

the hope that political leaders will come to the rescue is unlikely to work: we should be preparing for either stop-the-clock at the end of December while a last-minute fudge is worked out, or no deal at all.

Beyond those detailed negotiations lie some big issues related to Britain's place in the world and our global influence. The E3 arrangement between France, Germany and the UK still functions, and is helping to manage the fall-out from Trump's abandonment of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran. More generally, on many of the big international issues the UK is more naturally aligned these days with its European partners than with the US. But there is still a sense that we currently have little bandwidth or inclination to play the kind of substantive foreign policy role we have played in the past, and disappointment in EU capitals that we don't want to include foreign and security policy in the structure of our new post-Brexit relationship. I would say this, wouldn't I, but we need to guard against the risk that, despite the talk of Global Britain, we find ourselves unable to exercise as much influence outside the EU as we did inside it—a concern shared by foreign policy experts in Washington.

So at some point you might want to consider boosting our soft and hard power alike by bringing together the substantial resources of our defence, international development, international trade and foreign ministries in more joined-up fashion to restore the UK's global credibility, trust and diplomatic clout. Our friends feel we have left the stage and want us back. We have in the past come up with original ideas, built bridges and helped solve problems. We should aspire to do so again.

Yours,

PETER.

#### THE AIR TOUR AND SKYDIVING SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2020

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, in 2019, 21 people died in Hawaii in three tragic air recreation accidents involving helicopters or planes.

On December 26, 2019, while many of us were enjoying the holidays with our loved ones and friends, seven people lost their lives when an air tour helicopter crashed into a mountain on the Island of Kauai. All aboard the helicopter were killed, a mother and daughter from Wisconsin, a family of four from Switzerland, and the pilot. We still do not know the cause of the crash. In April 2019, an air tour helicopter crashed on a street in the residential neighborhood of Kailua on the island of Oahu, killing all aboard: two passengers and the pilot. We were fortunate that no one on the ground was injured. On June 22, 2019, 11 people died when a small plane crashed during take-off on a skydiving trip from Dillingham Airfield on Oahu. In the first accident of 2020, on March 5, six people walked away after a hard landing of an air tour helicopter on the Big Island of Hawaii. No one on the helicopter was seriously injured.

Since 2015, the National Transportation Safety Board, or NTSB, has investigated 10 air tour accidents in Hawaii and more than 46 nationwide.

Senator SCHATZ and I are introducing the Air Tour and Skydiving Safety Im-

provement Act of 2020. The bill takes the outstanding safety issues and recommendations identified by the NTSB to improve the safety and accountability of air sightseeing tours and parachute tours. The Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, has not implemented the NTSB's recommendations.

In most years, Hawaii welcomes nearly 10 million visitors annually to enjoy everything Hawaii has to offer, from our Aloha spirit displayed by our resident, to the scenic beauty of the State. It is critical that the helicopters and planes taking both visitors and residents sightseeing or parachuting operate as safely as possible.

The NTSB has recommended multiple improvements to the standards covering air tour and parachute operations by the FAA. In the aftermath of the helicopter crash in Kailua and the crash of two chartered floatplanes in Alaska, NTSB Chairman Robert L. Sumwalt said in May 2019: "While these tragic accidents are still under investigation, and no findings or causes have been determined, each crash underscores the urgency of improving the safety of charter flights by implementing existing NTSB safety recommendations." To highlight this urgency, the NTSB put improvements to air tour aircraft on its 2019–2020 Most Wanted List of transportation safety improvements.

Let me describe the provisions of the legislation. First, the bill requires parachute and air tour companies to operate under the same standards as other commercial air operations, such as commuter airlines under Part 135, which has certification standards. Currently, commercial companies can operate like private civil aircraft if they operate within 25 miles of their airport, under regulations found in Part 91. The NTSB recommends that all commercial air operations meet the same standards for training, certification, operations, and crew rest under part 135.

The bill requires that the FAA establish a standard for terrain awareness and warning systems and minimum standards for training pilots to avoid flying into mountains and other terrain. This may have prevented the helicopter crash on Kauai in December 2019, which crashed into the side of a mountain.

Following another NTSB recommendation, the bill requires operators install crash-resistant flight data recording equipment, we can learn more from accidents and to help identify flaws in equipment and improve pilot performance.

The helicopter involved in the December 2019 crash in Kauai lacked flight data monitoring, so inspectors were uncertain of its flight path and performance. The bill requires the FAA to establish and implement a standard for remote monitoring of flight data. It also requires operators to establish a flight data monitoring program to identify changes from normal procedures and other potential safety issues.

The bill includes provisions to make sure that the current and future recommendations of the NTSB are given full consideration by the FAA. It requires the FAA to indicate how their response to NTSB safety recommendations will meet or exceed safety outcomes of the NTSB's recommendations, if the FAA declines to adopt the NTSB recommendations. The bill also directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to include NTSB recommendations on air tours and parachute operations in its annual report on aviation safety.

The safety of parachute operations would be improved by the standards that I have described, but the bill also addresses the unique safety needs of parachute operations. The bill would require the FAA to develop new or revised regulations for parachute operations, including enhanced maintenance and inspection for aircraft and training and recurrent testing requirements for pilots.

The bill we are introducing today would make great improvements to increase the safety of air tours. This is a first step. But this legislation does not address all the issues with air tour helicopters. The issues of noise, frequency, and safety associated with air tour operations in the State of Hawaii have been going on for decades.

In September 2016, at the request of State Representative Onishi, my office requested a meeting for Big Island State legislators with the FAA Honolulu Flight Standards District Office, or FSDO, to address the issue of the helicopter noise for residents in East Hawaii. We learned at this meeting that FAA-FSDO and Hawaii Department of Transportation do not have the authority to address the noise issue raised by the community.

In March 2017, FAA and the National Park Service representatives traveled to Hawaii from their DC headquarters to convene public listening sessions in Honolulu and Hilo, respectively, "to better identify specific concerns with helicopter operations within and outside of national parks." Community members were looking for relief from noise issues associated with air tour overflights over residential areas.

We were hopeful that these meetings were a signal of FAA's engagement so we could address community concerns with the air tour operators. Individuals from the community came prepared and raised questions about how other communities across the country have dealt with this issue including the New York North Shore Helicopter Route and the adjustments to routes over Los Angeles County.

State and local governments, air tour companies, and the community were interested in engaging. Unfortunately, while the FAA initiated the meetings, they disappointed many in our community when they announced that their agency could only offer technical advice and the effort did not result in an air tour safety plan.

In another example of FAA inaction, Congress required the FAA and the National Park Service to develop air tour management plans for our national parks under the Air Tour Management Act of 2000. For two decades, inter-agency fighting prevented any progress from being made. In 2018, the Hawaii Island Malama Pono Coalition and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, groups representing national park employees and visitors, filed a petition in Federal court to compel the agencies to regulate air tours at seven parks.

On May 1, 2020, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ordered the FAA and the National Park Service to develop air tour management plans for 23 national parks, including Haleakala National Park and Volcanoes National Park in Hawaii. The court found that the agencies' efforts were "underwhelming," "ultimately unsuccessful," and failed to develop the plans in a reasonable amount of time.

The court expects the agencies to develop the air tour management plans for all 23 parks within 2 years, and the court will retain jurisdiction to continue oversight until the agencies have completed the plans.

Volcanoes National Park was the subject of 8,333 air tour flights in 2018, over 22 flights per day, the highest number of air tour flights of any national park. Haleakala had the fourth most air tour flights in 2018, with 4,757 flights. The residents in the surrounding communities in the flight path and visitors trying to enjoy the quiet of nature are all too aware of the visual and the noise from air tour flights.

With the decision by the Court, many in Hawaii now expect action in the development of air tour management plans for Hawaii's two national parks.

Of course, air tours affect residents and communities in Hawaii throughout the State. On January 9 of this year, members of the Hawaii Helicopter Association, Hawaii Department of Transportation's Airports Division, appointees from the State legislature, and other stakeholders formed the Hawaii Air Noise and Safety Task Force with representatives from the FAA as technical advisers. The task force was created to "fund public meetings, produce a study and make recommendations concerning the helicopter and fixed wing tour industry."

It remains clear to me that the FAA needs to address its failure to oversee the air tour industry. On January 31, Senator SCHATZ and I joined in the Senate Commerce Committee's request for an investigation by the inspector general of the Department of Transportation into allegations that the FAA's Honolulu Flight Standards District Office ignored serious concerns about the safety of helicopter air tours in Hawaii. We requested an investigation into the oversight lapses raised by the whistleblowers. The ongoing investigation by

the inspector general will show whether FAA is able to enforce its own rules in Hawaii.

What remains clear is that the NTSB has recommended additional standards to the FAA to improve safety throughout the country, but the FAA has not addressed these safety issues. We have waited long enough for action.

The legislation we are introducing will strengthen the rules to ensure accountability and safety for Hawaii's aviation operators and travelers.

#### FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF CHARLESTON CHURCH SHOOTING

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, 5 years have passed, and it still feels like a bad dream, but we know it actually happened. The senseless murder of nine parishioners at Mother Emanuel hit South Carolina like a ton of bricks. It remains hard to understand how anyone could have so much hate in their heart. To be welcomed into a church, worship with the parishioners, and then turn around and shoot them in cold blood remains one of the most horrific acts ever recorded.

Then just days after this horrible tragedy, the people at Mother Emanuel showed a level of love and forgiveness that was truly unimaginable. It was an act that is rarely seen. I personally cannot imagine turning to the person who killed my family members saying, I forgive you. I know that type of grace can only come from God. Of all the things that I have seen in public life, the words from the family members continue to amaze me to this day. You must truly have the love of the Lord in your heart to be able to muster that kind of forgiveness.

On the 5-year anniversary, we think of those who lost their lives and the families left behind, the Christmases without loved ones, the birthdays missed. Our hearts are still broken, and our prayers remain with the parishioners at Mother Emanuel.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO DR. AMY ACTON

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my appreciation for a great Ohioan and public servant, Dr. Amy Acton, for her leadership and expertise while serving as the director of the Ohio Department of Health.

Born and raised in Youngstown, OH, Dr. Acton knew she wanted to be a doctor from a young age. She attended Northeastern Ohio University School of Medicine, studying pediatrics and preventive medicine. Dr. Acton continued her education, earning a master's degree in public health from the Ohio State University, where she went on to teach as an associate professor.

In 2019, Governor Mike DeWine appointed her to lead our State's health department, the first woman to hold the position in Ohio's history.

That job is always critical, public health is one of the most important jobs our government does, and until a few months ago, it was too often underappreciated. But 17 months ago, few could have predicted just how vital Dr. Acton's role would be, as she stepped up to lead Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 22, 2020, while much of the Nation was still in denial about the quickly evolving pandemic, Dr. Acton led the charge and issued a statewide stay at home order, making Ohio one of the first States to do so. Understanding that the best leaders are open and honest, Dr. Acton participated in the Governor's daily press conferences. She answered questions and helped explain the threat of COVID-19 and the actions her department was taking to keep Ohioans safe through clever analogies, from brewing storms to Swiss cheese.

Throughout the spring, under Dr. Acton's leadership, Ohio continued to lead the country in taking bold action to slow COVID-19's spread. Dr. Acton's early intervention, supported by science and data, saved lives and significantly slowed the spread of the virus in Ohio.

Dr. Acton put the life and well-being of people over politics. She used empathy and honesty to educate, inform, and comfort Ohioans in uncertain times, exceeding the duties expected of her, to ensure the health and safety of her fellow Ohioans.

Thank you, Dr. Acton, for your wisdom, bravery, and compassion throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Your leadership saved countless lives in Ohio. I am sure my Senate colleagues will join me in thanking Dr. Amy Acton for her exemplary efforts. •

#### 2020 SERVICE ACADEMY APPOINTEES FROM UTAH

• Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor 14 exemplary young Utahns who have answered the call of service to our country.

Each year, Members of Congress are authorized to nominate a number of young men and women from their district or State to attend our Nation's service academies: the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy.

The men and women whom I nominated on behalf of the State of Utah this year are some of the best and brightest in our country.

Each of these students is of sound mind and body, which will serve them well in Colorado Springs, West Point, and Annapolis. But the journey on which these young men and women will soon embark demands more than strength of mind and strength of body. It demands strength of character. It requires qualities of leadership, courage, honesty, prudence, and selfdiscipline. It calls for a commitment to service and a love of country. And ultimately, it requires a willingness to give the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of the safety and security of our Nation.