

mitigate any reduction in anti-air and ballistic missile defense capabilities if the number of DDG-51 destroyers were in fact reduced from current plans. My intention is to ensure that we continue to maintain a strong Navy capable of projecting power and maintaining presence anywhere across the globe.

In January, when news began to leak that the Department's budget request would dramatically reduce procurement of DDG-51's in the 5-year budget plan, I sent a letter to Defense Secretary Esper expressing my strong objections. To date, the Navy has still not adequately justified such deep cuts in ship procurement, which would have devastating effects on our defense industrial base, including our private shipyards. This amendment and this bill will help to protect our shipbuilding industrial base, which will be essential to reach the goal of a 355-ship Navy.

This bill also includes important provisions for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery. The NDAA authorizes \$160 million for the first phase of funding for PNSY's Multi-Mission Dry Dock No. 1 extension military construction project, which will be authorized and funded over 3 years due to its large size. This project will ensure our Nation's submarines stay well maintained and at sea for years to come.

In addition, the NDAA contains provisions I championed along with Senator SHAHEEN, which will help our PNSY firefighters develop alternative work schedules and exempt public shipyard workers from DOD's government lodging program when it would adversely affect their mission.

In further support of both our public and private shipyards, the bill also includes an amendment I authored that directs the Navy to report on its plans to prevent and mitigate the impacts of future pandemics, including at private and public shipyards, by focusing on the health and safety of the shipyard workers. Amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, I led a number of bipartisan letters from the Maine delegation and spoke with the Secretary of the Navy to encourage the Department to do more to protect our shipyard workers' health and safety. My amendment continues that effort, and I again thank Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for adopting it as part of their substitute amendment.

This NDAA also makes continued investments in America's air power, authorizing 95 fifth-generation Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and seven CH-53K King Stallion helicopters. The workers at Pratt & Whitney's North Berwick factory are proud of their contributions in making the F-35's top-of-line engine the best in the sky, and Hunting Dearborn in Fryberg has been making important contributions to both the F-35 and CH-53K programs for years.

The NDAA also provides important authorizations for the Maine National Guard, including a provision ensuring

that Maine Guard members who were activated to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic can receive transitional health benefits. The Maine National Guard has done a phenomenal job supporting our State during the health crisis, taking on tasks such as fit-testing healthcare workers for N95 masks, helping the Maine CDC inventory its supplies and deliver PPE and ventilators across the State, and setting up an external triage tent outside of the Togus VA Medical Center.

This bill also provides authorization for an important perimeter security construction project at the Navy's detachment in Cutler, Maine, which will ensure the security of an important installation that allows Navy commanders to communicate with U.S. and NATO ships, planes, and submarines operating in the Atlantic. This project was the Navy's No. 1 unfunded military construction priority.

There are so many other provisions of this bill that I am proud to support. Just to identify a few, the United States-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act of 2020, which I cosponsored, was incorporated into the bill and would authorize important security assistance, energy and agricultural cooperation, and provide other authorities to support our steadfast ally Israel.

Another amendment I offered which was incorporated into the bill would require DOD to study its military requirements for negative air pressure room containment systems which are used to isolate patients with contagious illnesses, necessary equipment I believe is essential for DOD to successfully combat and contain future pandemics.

The bill also authorizes the creation of a new Pacific Deterrence Initiative to provide increased security assistance and engagement throughout the Indo-Pacific region in response to an increasingly aggressive Chinese Communist Party.

Enactment of this NDAA is vitally important for the security of our Nation, our servicemembers and their families. I look forward to the Senate's conference with the House and quickly sending the final fiscal year 2021 NDAA to the President's desk.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO MICHELLE COOLICAN

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Michelle Coolican, the Flagler County Teacher of the Year from Buddy Taylor Middle School in Palm Coast, FL.

Michelle believes the Teacher of the Year award goes beyond her personal achievement; she considers it an honor for the entire teaching profession. She credits her colleagues, the school's administration for its learning environment, and the students she works with every day for this recognition.

Superintendent Jim Tager noted Michelle's ability to connect with her students by promoting learning through community projects and classroom experiments. She enjoys making her students excited to study science, and they have learned to expect a new project each time they enter her classroom.

Michelle has taught science for 13 years at Buddy Taylor Middle School. She also serves as an adviser for the school's after-school STEM club.

I extend my best wishes to Michelle for receiving this award and look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years to come.●

##### TRIBUTE TO LEENA HALL-YOUNG

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to honor Leena Hall-Young, the Duval County Teacher of the Year at Raines High School in Jacksonville, FL.

Leena is a tenth grade language arts teacher at Raines High School where she considers her role as a teacher to be a facilitator in releasing every child's potential. Superintendent Diana Greene describes Leena as a vibrant and talented educator who has dedicated her career to her students. Leena is credited with fostering a professional learning environment for her colleagues. Under her leadership, her school has seen reading proficiency rates increase by double digits.

Leena is the chairwoman of the English language arts department and helps to create learning opportunities for her colleagues by supporting first year teachers. She also participates in Duval County's Innovative Educator Program.

I extend my best wishes and thanks to Leena for her passion as a teacher, and I look forward to learning of her continued good work.●

##### TRIBUTE TO SAMANTHA HOWER

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I have the privilege to honor Samantha Hower, the Lee County Teacher of the Year from Mariner High School in Cape Coral, FL.

Samantha is the Visual Arts Teacher at Mariner High School and has worked for 7 years in the Lee County School District. Under Samantha's leadership, the school's STEM Academy has become the STEAM Academy, with an art curriculum added to science, technology, engineering, and math. She also began the school's first National Art Honor Society and supports nearby elementary and middle school art programs.

Samantha holds that an education is able to transform a child's entire life. She urges her students to ask the question why: Why do they like something, and why do they do what they do? She does this until they begin to ask these questions themselves. When this happens, Samantha knows they have found comfort in taking risks.

While Samantha always wants her students to do their best and earn good grades, she strives for them to walk out of her classroom knowing how to think and respond to circumstances with prudence. Since opening her advanced placement classes to all students 2 years ago, her students have produced the highest AP 2D studio art scores in the school district. Her goal is to prepare her students for college and careers through gaining experience and developing skills above and beyond their peers.

I am pleased to recognize Samantha for her hard work. I extend to her my warmest regards, and I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

#### TRIBUTE TO RYAN MITCHELL

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Ryan Mitchell, the Hamilton County Teacher of the Year from Hamilton County High School in Jasper, FL.

Ryan is an instructional coach at Hamilton County High School and has worked with Hamilton County Schools since 2018. He assists middle school and high school teachers with instructional modeling, lessons and planning, and demonstrating various methods of teaching. He also monitors students' progress from within the schools.

Ryan believes he would not have received this award if not for the support of his family and friends. He is grateful for the countless relationships he has developed in Hamilton County and throughout Florida. It is these relationships that have made him the teacher he is today.

Ryan is also very thankful for his students and considers it an honor to be their teacher. Each day, he looks forward to teaching his students, knowing they are the next generation of future leaders. Ryan makes sure he is available to answer all of his student's questions, and he hopes they learn half as much from him as he learns from them.

I offer my sincere gratitude to Ryan for his work to help students. I look forward to hearing of his continued good work in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO TRAVIS O'STEEN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to recognize Travis O'Steen, the Dixie County Teacher of the Year at Dixie County High School in Cross City, FL.

Travis currently teaches U.S. history at Dixie County High School. Travis earned his bachelor's degree in religion and history from William Carey University. After completing his world travels, he felt he could bring his studies and global experience as a teacher to his students. Previously, he taught finance, English, and the performing arts for high school students.

Travis has always been interested in learning why people believe in what

they do. This has led him to travel the world to research history, cultures, and archaeology. After returning home, he found that these teaching experiences enhanced his own classroom instruction. This enhanced knowledge has enabled him to help his students to better understand and develop a passion for American and world history.

I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Travis for his devotion to helping his students to succeed. I look forward to hearing of his continued success in his future endeavors.●

#### TRIBUTE TO ROB PASCHALL

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Rob Paschall, the Orange County Teacher of the Year at West Creek Elementary School in Orlando, FL.

Rob has been an educator for 27 years and currently teaches fifth grade at West Creek Elementary School. In the past year, more than 80 percent of Rob's students demonstrated learning gains, one of many measurable changes credited to his teaching practices. Outside of the classroom, Rob regularly sponsors the school safety patrols, serves as a teacher liaison for the PTA, and works closely with the Florida Department of Education's Writing RangeFinder Committee.

Throughout his educational career, Rob looks to find at least one success each day worth celebrating. He believes in teaching intentionally and works to understand his student's unique learning styles. Rob develops lesson plans designed to meet the needs of each student, highlighting their strengths and finding areas in need of improvement.

Colleagues describe Rob as a humble teacher that enjoys educating younger generations. He strives to help his students improve each day and attributes their growth and success to their dedication and hard work.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Rob for his strong commitment to his students. I look forward to hearing of his continued good work in the years to come.●

#### TRIBUTE TO LORI PRICE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Lori Price, the St. Johns County Teacher of the Year from the Webster School in St. Augustine, FL.

Lori teaches first grade at the Webster School and believes in giving her students the opportunity to succeed no matter their circumstances. She is honored to be the person who pushes her students to go above and beyond what is expected of them.

A veteran teacher of more than 30 years, Lori has a positive approach to teaching math. She prompts her students to think like mathematicians so they can develop confidence in their ability to solve problems.

Lori has faith in her students and considers it her job as an educator to help them reach their potential. She

sets high expectations in the classroom to allow students to see challenges as opportunities. She loves to create a space in which children can confidently undertake challenges.

In addition to organizing the St. Johns County Math Conference and presenting at various mathematics conferences, Lori also offers monthly professional development meetings for her fellow math teachers. She is passionate about investing in her colleagues and hopes her work makes an impact on students in her district and beyond.

I convey my best wishes to Lori for her dedication to her students. I look forward to hearing of her continued success.●

#### TRIBUTE TO PAUL RICHARDSON

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Paul Richardson, the Bay County Teacher of the Year at Tom P. Haney Technical Center in Callaway, FL.

Paul is an instructor in welding technology and teaches the foundational program at Tom P. Haney Technical Center. His class covers a broad base of knowledge and skills such as management, environmental issues, and safety. Paul's goal is to prepare students for employment in the welding industry. He also instructs advanced welding technology for students who have demonstrated a mastery of his foundational program.

Paul is the first instructor at Tom P. Haney Technical Center to receive this award. It is also the first time Bay County has named a technical school teacher "Teacher of the Year." Paul credited his colleagues for this achievement, noting their combined work helps students with their education. He was thankful to see that the importance of technical education was recognized.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Paul for his dedication to his students, and I look forward to hearing of his continued good work in the years ahead.●

#### TRIBUTE TO VANESSA VALLE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am pleased to honor Vanessa Valle, the Miami-Dade County Teacher of the Year at Hialeah Gardens High School in Hialeah Gardens, FL.

While in high school, one of Vanessa's teachers inspired her to become a teacher. Since then, she has dedicated her life to educate and transform the lives of students, similar to how hers was changed.

Vanessa considers her job to be more than just teaching and imparting knowledge onto her students. She also seeks to bring empathy to the classroom and commits to helping turn their dreams into reality. Vanessa's colleagues note she is always willing to go the extra mile to help not only her students, but also her fellow teachers.