

served our Nation with distinction, but their service came at a great cost. Many developed health conditions due to radiation exposure, yet because they were not able to discuss the nature of their service, they were unable to seek medical care or disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their illnesses." Decades after their service, in 1996, Congress repealed the Nuclear Radiation and Secrecy Agreement Act, which enabled Atomic Veterans to seek services and share their experiences. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides information to connect Atomic Veterans with medical services and compensation. However, the National Association of Atomic Veterans, Inc., notes, "Currently, there are approximately 195,000 Atomic Veterans across America who either do not know their oath-of-secrecy has been rescinded, and who are not aware of the potential monetary benefits due them for (service connected) radiation induced illnesses."

While the best healthcare and other services in the world can never reverse what many Atomic Veterans and their families have endured, we owe it to America's servicemembers who have answered the call to duty to ensure access to high-quality services and resources to support their commitment to our country. As part of this effort, I cosponsored S.565, the Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, which would reclassify veterans who participated in the cleanup of the Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans, making them eligible for the same benefits afforded to those covered by Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, RECA. Work also continues on bipartisan legislation to extend and expand RECA eligibility to those in Idaho and other States who have suffered from cancers related to fallout from nuclear weapons testing during the Cold War period of the 1950s and 1960s. As work continues on these and other efforts to support veterans, I join in honoring Atomic Veterans whose service has been a central part of our national defense. I hope recognition can also draw attention to available services and resources for Atomic Veterans.

In 1983, then-President Ronald Reagan urged fellow citizens to join him in appreciation of the service of Atomic Veterans he characterized as, "those patriotic Americans who through their participation in these tests helped lead the United States to the forefront of technology in defense of our great Nation and the freedoms we as Americans hold so dear."

Thank you, Mac McCormack, and your fellow Atomic Veterans, for your immeasurable and in many ways unrepayable service. I hope you know how deeply grateful we as a nation are for your patriotism.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER GEORGE POULOS

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the Very Reverend Father George Poulos, a deeply admired community leader, who turns 100 on September 30.

Born in Massachusetts to Greek immigrants in 1921, Father George joined the priesthood in 1943. He began his studies in Connecticut at the Holy Cross Seminary in Pomfret. Upon graduating in 1948 from the Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, MA, Father George served as a pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Norwich, CT. Then, in 1956, he was assigned to the Church of the Archangels in Stamford, CT. In 2009, after over six decades of remarkable service, Father George retired. He still plays an active role at the Church of the Archangels, serving as pastor emeritus.

I have been privileged to know Father George as a leader of courage and conviction, whose great work has touched countless lives. His vision and dedication enabled the Church of the Archangels to build an amazing, 11th Century Byzantine-style Greek Orthodox Church, which was consecrated in 1959. Later, in 1976, the church campus opened the Greek Cultural Center, which offered athletic amenities for church youth and banquet facilities for the entire community. In 1995, this center became the Stamford Athletic Club, providing invaluable services to the public.

Father George oversaw the creation of Ionian Village, a summer camp youth program in Greece. Since 1970, it has hosted thousands of Greek-American campers, giving them the opportunity to further explore their cultural history, religious roots, and language. Father George also established "Byzantine Fellowship" in America, and in his 30-year tenure as executive director, helped sponsor Greek cultural events in the United States and pilgrimages.

Father George's tireless dedication to helping others has earned him enormous respect and affection, as well as official recognition. He was appointed as vicar general of the churches in Connecticut by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and in 2017, he received an honorary doctorate of divinity from Holy Cross Seminary. Father George is a prolific author and is actively involved in community service, as chaplain of the Stamford Fire Department, vice president of the local Council of Churches and Synagogues, and a major in the U.S. Air Force Civil Patrol.

I am honored to know Father George and his family for many years—indeed, decades. I can attest firsthand to his wonderful generosity and loyalty as a friend and his love for humanity, as well as the warm and welcoming spirit of his congregants. I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating the Very Reverend Father George Poulos, his wife, Christine, their five sons, and their six grandchildren on this milestone of Father George's 100th birthday.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1970

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, on Saturday, October 9, 2021, nearly 200 members of the class of 1970 of Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD, will hold their 50th class reunion, an event delayed a year by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is my pleasure to congratulate them on this special occasion.

This distinguished class of 1970 from Walt Whitman has an exemplary history of contributions to society and to advancing social justice. As children, a number of class members from the Bannockburn neighborhood in Bethesda joined a contingent from Howard University for the first multiracial civil rights protest in America, picketing segregated Glen Echo Amusement Park daily for 22 weeks in 1960 after Blacks were arrested for riding its carousel. As the result of these and other efforts, the policy was changed, and the park reopened to all the next year. And this year, those members of the class of 1970 will return to Glen Echo during their 50th reunion to ride that same carousel on its 100th anniversary.

The class of 1970 came of age at an important time in our Nation's history, a period of great change and dramatic events. When they were 8 years old in 1961, they saw President John F. Kennedy call for all citizens to commit to work for the common good. They saw the beginning of space exploration, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the arrival of the Beatles, the passage by the U.S. Congress of landmark bills on voting rights and fair housing, the Vietnam war, and the tragedies of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy.

This social awareness led to lifelong commitment and activism for so many in this remarkable class. In protest of the Vietnam war, many participated in the National Moratorium Against the War. In the dramatic March Against Death, dozens of members of the class carried the names of fallen soldiers whose families could not travel here to join the protest. As the first class of students subject to a draft lottery conducted by the Selective Service System, many classmates participated in efforts to abolish military conscription in the U.S. and in support of lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

In 1970, when members of this class were in their senior year, WWHS was named the No. 1 public high school in the Nation by "U.S. News & World Report," which also recently named Whitman the best high school in Maryland. Whitman's first principal, Dr. Daryl Shaw, called the class of 1970 "the most challenging" he ever had, in light of their frequent questioning of authority and vigorous advocacy for social change. Profound events that changed

the Nation happened during their high school years. The first moon landing and Woodstock happened only 27 days apart. And just 5 weeks before graduation, in a reflection of the profound tension in our Nation, 13 unarmed students were shot at Kent State, four fatally.

Some in their generation warned, "Don't trust anyone over 30." Now, as the class of 1970 approaches 70, its members can look back on 50 years of lives well lived. This class can boast of significant achievement, as its members include, among many other graduates of great distinction, elected officials, physicians, lawyers, real estate developers, orchestra conductors, musicians, magazine publishers, and at least one juggler.

I ask my colleagues to join me in sending our very best wishes and congratulations to the Walt Whitman High School class of 1970 as its members gather—1 year late—for their 50th reunion.●

TRIBUTE TO STEPHANIE BARNA

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is my honor to pay tribute to Stephanie Barna, who is retiring October 15 after more than 30 years of Federal service. A dedicated public servant, a fierce advocate for our Nation's men and women in uniform, and an astute legal mind, the Senate Committee on Armed Services has been extremely fortunate to have Ms. Barna as Republican General Counsel for the past 3 years.

Ms. Barna joined the Committee on Armed Services in November 2018, after decades of working within the Department of Defense both as a uniformed officer and as a civilian. As a career Senior Executive at the Pentagon, Ms. Barna held critical positions that focused on Total Force management, personnel matters, and improving the lives of our servicemembers and their families. Most recently, she performed the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis. Before that, she served as senior policy adviser to then-Under Secretary of Defense Robert Wilkie; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; performed the duties of Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; and Deputy General Counsel for Operations and Personnel in the Office of the Army General Counsel.

Ms. Barna began her public service career in 1989 as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. Ultimately, she retired from the U.S. Army Reserve in 2011 in the grade of colonel. She is also qualified as an Army Jumpmaster, and if she is willing to jump out of a perfectly safe plane, she is definitely able to work in Congress.

As a member of my staff on the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Ms. Barna played a critical role in the drafting and enactment of the fiscal

year 2020 and 2021 National Defense Authorization Acts, NDAA. Because of her work and commitment to bipartisan solutions, we successfully enacted the 59th and 60th consecutive NDAAs when many speculated it couldn't be done. I am grateful for her work this year to help usher the fiscal year 2022 NDAA toward the finish line as well. With creativity and tenacity, Ms. Barna shepherded important policy reforms that strengthened national security, improved the management of the Pentagon, and bettered the lives of our servicemembers.

Over her career, Ms. Barna received numerous, well-deserved accolades, including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Executive Presidential Rank Award, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Civilian Service, and the Department of the Army Exceptional Civilian Service Award—twice.

Most telling to her leadership, Ms. Barna has never asked for recognition. She is a tireless worker, wholly dedicated to serving her Nation. If you were to look up the definitions of "competent," "capable," and "grace under fire" in the dictionary, I am sure you would see her picture.

Ms. Barna leaves behind a legacy of getting things done, of doing what is good and right, and fulfilling the law to the best of her understanding. Because of her, the Department of Defense operates better, our troops are better cared for, and long-standing institution of the U.S. Senate live on. While she will leave big shoes to fill on the Senate Committee on Armed Services, I wish her very well in her well-earned retirement. For her service, she has my thanks and the thanks of a grateful nation.●

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN MEUSCHKE

● Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, today I am honored to recognize Susan Meuschke, executive director of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence—NCEDSV—who will officially retire on September 30, 2021.

Ms. Meuschke has been a champion for victims of domestic violence and their families for more than three decades. Her career in advocacy and awareness of the problem of family violence in our communities began when she was a volunteer for the Committee to Aid Abused Women in Reno, NV. It was there, while listening to the struggles and the courage of those dealing with family violence, that she found her lifelong passion for helping those in need. Ms. Meuschke then went on to work with NCEDSV for 32 years and was instrumental in developing the organization into a powerful force in the State of Nevada with 10 full-time staff members, a variety of consultants, and offices in both Reno and Las Vegas. Ms. Meuschke is also a founding member of the Nevada Domestic Violence Prevention Council and a former member of the National Coalition Against Domes-

tic Violence Steering Committee. In 2019, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak proclaimed February 1 as a day in honor of Ms. Meuschke, a fitting tribute for such a remarkable woman.

It has been an honor to work with Ms. Meuschke to help grow domestic violence programs. While I was Nevada's attorney general, I worked closely with Ms. Meuschke to ensure we passed legislation to create dedicated funding for domestic violence programs through fees on marriage licenses. Before her retirement, Ms. Meuschke and NCEDSV were also working on a bill to increase statewide funding for domestic violence services and to create funding for sexual violence services. These efforts reflect her dedication to working across the aisle to build a safer, more caring world for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

During 2020 and the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Meuschke worked hard to ensure that Federal coronavirus relief funding delivered to NCEDSV went to programs aimed at providing education and support to survivors in rural communities. The funding also sought to improve the financial independence of survivors through the Financial Empowerment Microloan program. Ms. Meuschke was crucial in seeing that the funds were distributed equitably to programs that would make the biggest difference in the lives of survivors.

As Ms. Meuschke enters her retirement, I want to make sure her decades of strong advocacy and empowerment are recognized for the important impact they have had in the State of Nevada. First as Nevada's attorney general and now as a U.S. Senator, I have been fortunate to work side-by-side with Ms. Meuschke to support families and make our communities safer. NCEDSV is not only a strong advocate for policies that protect victims but a resource for survivors who are looking for help. Much of its strength can be attributed to Ms. Meuschke's leadership and her unwavering resilience and fortitude to advocate on behalf of all survivors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Roberts, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)