

flexibility to our Federal firefighters that their State and local counterparts have enjoyed for many years. As a result of this bill, Federal firefighters will be able to trade shifts across pay periods without negatively affecting their pay.

This NDAA also establishes a consortium on irregular warfare threats, a critical step in the transfer of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism—START—from the sponsorship of the Department of Homeland Security to the Department of Defense, which has the resources to maintain this national security research. I previously worked to secure funding for this transition in the FY21 defense appropriations bill. The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, better known as START, is a university-based research and education center based at the University of Maryland and comprised of an international network of scholars committed to the scientific study of the causes and human consequences of terrorism in the United States and around the world.

I am also glad the NDAA incorporates the Enhancing Military Base Resilience and Conserving Ecosystems through Stormwater Management Act, which I introduced with Senators KAINE, CARDIN, and WARNER. This bill authorizes the Defense Department to carry out stormwater management projects on military installations. These projects will improve installation resilience and essential infrastructure that supports military installations and protect nearby waterways like the Chesapeake Bay. In August, I worked to secure language in the FY22 Military Construction-VA Appropriations bill encouraging the Department of Defense to use Energy Resilience and Conservation Program funds to support stormwater management projects in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in order to better protect and conserve the health of the bay.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the Senate Armed Services Committee for working with me to address the Army's incorrect application of the law pertaining to the Prisoner of War Medal, which has negatively affected a Maryland veteran. In 2020, I asked the Army to award the POW Medal to Marylander Ronald Dolecki for his military service in Ethiopia in 1965, which he has been denied for over a decade. Mr. Dolecki clearly qualifies for the Medal under the criteria established by Congress in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, but the Army continued to incorrectly apply the previous standard to his case. I am grateful to Chairman REED and Ranking Member INHOFE for including language directing the Army to rectify its incorrect application of the law to ensure that this Marylander who served his country with honor and distinction and others like him are appropriately recognized.

Lastly, this bill includes funding and language that is critical to supporting Maryland's military installations, including more than \$350 million for Fort Meade, more than \$150 million for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and more than \$30 million for Joint Base Andrews. The bill also includes report language ensuring the Army's continued support for the demolition of contaminated facilities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and provisions to continue responding to the recent crisis in privatized military housing which affected installations in Maryland and across the country.

While I am pleased with many of the provisions included in this bill and voted for its passage, I do have significant reservations.

I appreciate that this bill codifies the GAO's recommendations related to tactical vehicle rollover accidents in response to the tragic loss of 1LT Conor McDowell, a U.S. marine who lost his life in a training accident at Camp Pendleton. 1LT McDowell showed extraordinary bravery, saving the life of a fellow marine, and Congress has a responsibility to ensure that these preventable crashes end. The bill also includes a directive that the Department of Defense report on the cost and feasibility of a pilot program that Senators CARDIN and Representatives BROWN and WITTMAN and I proposed in the the 1LT Hugh Conor McDowell Safety in Armed Forces Equipment Act of 2021. This simple, straightforward bill directs the Departments of the Army and the Navy to jointly implement a 5-year pilot program to evaluate the prospect of using data recorders to monitor, assess, and improve the readiness and safety of the operation of military tactical vehicles. This commonsense program will improve the safety of our men and women in uniform and save lives. I believe we could have proceeded with this pilot today, but look forward to receiving the mandated report no later than March 1, 2022, as directed, and I will continue to advocate vigorously for the implementation of this program.

I am disappointed that the NOAA does not include my amendment to prohibit the use of funds for the research and development, production or deployment of the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile—SLCM-N—and its associated nuclear warhead. The United States already possesses an array of nonstrategic nuclear capabilities that fulfill our theater nuclear deterrence missions and reassure our allies of our extended deterrence commitments. In its 2019 cost estimate of U.S. nuclear weapons programs, the CBO projected that the SLCM-N would cost \$9 billion through 2028. This projection does not account for production costs after 2028, nor does it factor in costs associated with integrating the missile on ships, nuclear weapons training for personnel, and storage and security for nuclear warheads on naval bases. Not only is the program a waste of money, it will also dangerously raise

the risk of nuclear miscalculation and escalation.

I also believe that this bill fails to tackle the long-term budget challenges facing our country. In the midst of a pandemic that has taken the lives of more than 800,000 of our fellow Americans, we simply cannot afford to continue this level of investment in defense at the expense of other critical national priorities. I oppose the decision to invest an additional \$25 billion over the President's budget request for defense while we continue to underinvest in diplomacy, development, and a wide range of critical domestic priorities.

Lastly, I am disappointed that the bill did not include my amendment with Representative JACOBS to close a loophole that allows some U.S. security assistance to foreign forces without being subject to Leahy law restrictions that bar U.S. military assistance to units credibly believed to have engaged in gross violations of human rights. This is a simple, straightforward matter of the United States living up to our most basic commitments as a member of the international community. The accompanying NDAA report language does require the presentation of a report detailing the processes through which the Defense Department seeks to ensure that consideration is given to any credible information relating to violations of human rights by such entities, before support is given to them. I will be reviewing that report closely to determine what further action is necessary to safeguard human rights and ensure that no U.S. security assistance is exempt from these commonsense restrictions.

While I am opposed to some of the provisions in this bill and disappointed by the omission of others, I believe that, on balance, the NDAA will strengthen our national security and advance other important national priorities. For that reason, I voted in support of final passage.

REMEMBERING DR. SHERIF R. ZAKI

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Dr. Sherif R. Zaki, an exceptional leader at the CDC who passed away on November 21, 2021.

Dr. Zaki, who joined the CDC in 1988, was the founder and branch chief of CDC's Infectious Disease Pathology Branch, IDPB. During his tenure at CDC, Dr. Zaki's vision and determination took the pathology laboratory to the forefront of the Agency's work in responding to public health threats posed by various infectious disease agents and established this team to be as one of the most highly respected infectious disease pathology laboratories in the world.

Dr. Zaki was an internationally recognized expert in infectious disease pathology, whose work over the past several decades transformed CDC's approach to the integration of pathology

as a core component of outbreak investigations. The rigorous and innovative laboratory work carried out by his team has advanced infectious disease experts' knowledge of many pathogens and their role in the human disease process. These included investigations of hantavirus, leptospirosis, West Nile virus, anthrax, SARS coronaviruses, avian and human influenza viruses, Ebola virus, Zika virus, and numerous transplant-associated infections, to name only a few. As an author of hundreds of publications and numerous textbook chapters, he is widely considered to be among the most influential infectious disease pathologists of his generation.

As chief of IDPB, Dr. Zaki is widely recognized for his personal leadership, scientific contributions, and commitment to CDC's public health mission. Among his many awards are the HHS Secretary's Awards for Distinguished Service, which he received nine times and is the highest honor at HHS. Known and respected for his humbleness, Dr. Zaki was uncomfortable with personal accolades and always quick to point to the efforts of his IDPB colleagues and others. Dr. Zaki was a generous teacher and mentor of younger scientists, friends, and former colleagues.

My prayers are with Dr. Zaki's wife Nadia, his two children, and friends during this difficult time. I am grateful for his dedication at the CDC, and I am honored to recognize his extraordinary contributions today.

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JASON JENKINS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize CMSgt Jason Jenkins for his dedicated service to the U.S. Air Force and the Senate as a Legislative Defense Fellow. Jason served as a vital part of my team in 2020. He was a trusted adviser on issues relating to the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Jason's effort and reliability distinguished him as a valuable member of my legislative team. In particular, Jason played an integral role in the recovery of Fort Smith native and World War II combat pilot Lt. Henry Donald Mitchell's remains, a mission 77 years in the making.

Jason took his responsibility to bring his fellow airman home very seriously. His steadfast dedication and persistence were crucial to its success. He worked tirelessly to ensure the United States and Austrian officials, private landowners, and Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency leaders coordinated and engaged to achieve the right outcome. It would not have been possible without the efforts of Jason. He helped bring closure and resolution to Lt. Mitchell's community and loved ones, allowing them to close that chapter and find the comfort that been so elusive after his remains were buried in the Fayetteville National Cemetery.

Jason also diligently worked to help secure resources for our servicemembers, their families, and Arkansans through his support of the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee and the successful passage of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. His passion to serve veterans and their families was demonstrated through his contributions to veteran legislation he advised on, including the John Scott Hannon Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019.

I also want to thank Jason's wife, Jami, and his children, Mike and Skyla, for their support of Jason's continued service to the U.S. Air Force. As the son of an Air Force master sergeant, I understand service to the Armed Forces is a family affair and is impossible without their sacrifice and unconditional support. Jason's son Mike has followed in his dad's footsteps and is currently serving in the U.S. Air Force in London.

A special highlight during Jason's time in my office was his promotion to chief master sergeant, a testament to his family, unlimited potential, and passion to serve others.

Jason, thank you for your continued service to the U.S. Air Force and for your time working in my office. It was our privilege to have you as a part of our team. My office will always welcome you. I know that you will be an asset to whatever future endeavors you pursue, and I wish you and your family the best.

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT CARLOS SANCHEZ

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize SMSgt Carlos Sanchez for his dedicated service to the U.S. Air Force and the Senate as a Legislative Defense Fellow. Carlos has served as a vital part of my team since January 2021. He has been a trusted adviser on issues relating to the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Carlos enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 2002. His continued service is a reminder of the sacrifices necessary to maintain the opportunities available to us as U.S. citizens.

Carlos's effort and passion to serve distinguished him as a valuable member of my legislative team. His determination was evident and helped lead to passage of the transformative SAVE LIVES Act, which allowed the VA to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to all veterans and their spouses. When preparing for a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing earlier this year, Carlos posed a question that led to the introduction and passage of this critical legislation.

Carlos was also instrumental in the final months of the effort that led to the recovery of World War II combat pilot Lt. Henry Donald Mitchell. After years of work by Lt. Mitchell's brother, Bob Mitchell, and my office to lo-

cate and return this Fort Smith native home, Carlos helped ensure the authorities could access and correctly identify Lt. Mitchell.

His desire to serve his fellow airmen was demonstrated through his work in coordinating the first visit by Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne Bass to Little Rock Air Force Base. Because of that experience, I believe the needs of our airmen and their families were further elevated and will result in an even higher prioritizing of getting them the resources and support needed to successfully execute their mission.

Carlos's steadfast dedication to serve and support the people of Arkansas has been inspirational. While in Arkansas, he spoke with and listened to the concerns of Arkansan veterans and their families, then worked tirelessly to ensure their concerns were heard and issues were resolved.

We have been very fortunate during Carlos's time in my office. I also want to thank his wife, Laura, and his daughters Sophia and Isabella, for their support of Carlos's time in uniform. As the son of an Air Force master sergeant, I understand service to the Armed Forces is a family affair and is impossible without their sacrifice and unconditional support.

Carlos, thank you for your continued service to the U.S. Air Force and for all your heartfelt, committed work as a member of my staff. It was our privilege to have you as a part of our team, and our office will always welcome you. I know that you will remain an asset to our military and veterans in addition to any other endeavors you pursue, and I wish you and your family the best.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MARIA GOMEZ

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to an extraordinary leader, a visionary healthcare advocate, and a tireless champion for the people of my state and for citizens across the National Capital Region: Maria Gomez. Ms. Gomez is retiring this month after 33 years as the president and CEO of Mary's Center, a renowned federally-qualified health center that she founded in 1988, and which has transformed the lives of countless individuals and families throughout our region. Her tireless efforts to improve the health and well-being of underserved families and individuals in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area have left an indelible mark on our communities, and her lifetime of service has inspired a new generation of activists, advocates, healthcare leaders, and public servants. I would like to share her story today and have the course of her life forever written into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Ms. Gomez immigrated to the United States from Colombia with her mother