

attacked with mortars in Vietnam's Quang Tri Province.

Private Joshua's younger sister Judy recalls getting ready for her high school graduation when the notification officers arrived with news of her brother's passing. A day that started as a celebration of graduation turned into a day of tragedy as she, her mother, and her sisters received the news. Still Judy remembers the screams in shock and despair.

The Joshua family never got over the passing of their beloved brother and son James. Judy's mom especially struggled to cope with the loss. She passed away from a heart attack at age 49, which Judy attributes to the grief she experienced following the tragic loss.

Private Joshua was posthumously awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his courage and his bravery. His hometown of Gadsden honors his service at Central-Carver Museum's Wall of Honor. He is also honored on Panel 65E, Line 11, of the Wall of Faces at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial here in Washington, DC. Private Joshua gave his country the best years of his life, a sacrifice we can never fully repay.

Sadly, his life is not the only instance of years cut short because of service to our country. Private First Class Thomas Stagg, known as Tommy, from Birmingham, AL, was declared missing in action in 1950 during the Korean war. He was 21 years old at the time. He and 10 other paratroopers from the U.S. Army 187th Regimental Combat Team were on a patrol in the Hwanghae Province when they were overwhelmed by Chinese forces. All 11 members were declared dead and missing in action.

Private Stagg received several awards for his services, including a Purple Heart and a National Defense Service Medal.

Private Stagg's nephew, Colonel Larry Leonard, was very young when his family received the news about his uncle, but he witnessed the toll it took on his mother who had already lost another brother during World War II. Colonel Leonard shared that his mother's dying wish was for her little brother to be found and returned to Birmingham to be buried alongside her and their parents. Five years ago, Colonel Leonard saw his mother's wish fulfilled. Thanks to the help of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency or the DPAA under the Department of Defense, Private Stagg's remains were identified and returned home for a proper memorial service in 2017, more than 67 years after he was declared missing.

Colonel Leonard says that while Memorial Day is a somber day, it is important to recognize those who "thought so much of their country they were willing to give their lives for it."

I know it is estimated more than 81,600 missing American soldiers are

still missing since World War I—81,600 still missing.

Some families are still searching for answers, like Teresa Schmitt of Huntsville, AL, who was only 8 years old when her father, U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Elbert Phillips' airplane crashed in the Mekong River during the Vietnam war. Sergeant Phillips' body was never recovered, but he was presumed dead and labeled missing in action.

Teresa was one of six children between the ages of 4 and 11 who were left behind. She spoke of the many days and nights she spent waiting to see if her father would ever be found and the heartbreak of growing up knowing that he would never be present to teach her how to ride a bike, meet her high school boyfriends, celebrate her graduation, or walk down the aisle at her wedding.

Teresa's mother committed to raising her children alone, never remarrying in the hopes that her husband would return. Sergeant Phillips received numerous awards for his courage, including the National Defense Service Medal with one Battle Star and the Air Force Commendation Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. He is honored at the Huntsville Veterans Memorial in Alabama and on Panel 46W, Line 52, of the Wall of Faces at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial here in Washington, DC.

The Phillips family reminds us of the ordinary moments we take for granted and the immense sacrifice of Gold Star families.

Our military defends us abroad, but also protects us here right at home when acts of terror occur on American soil. That is the story of U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st class Marsha Ratchford, a native of Prichard, AL, who was killed when hijackers crashed American Airlines flight 77 into her office on the western side of the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

She is described by her family as someone with a huge, huge heart who was passionate about helping those in need. The 34-year-old mother left behind a husband and three young children ages 11, 8, and 18 months. She was awarded a Purple Heart for her courage in the wake of one of the most horrific days in America's history.

Officer Ratchford's son Rodney told the story of learning about his mother's passing when he arrived home to see his father crying as he held the telephone and recalled him seeing the Pentagon in flames on television. Rodney described the next day without his mother like "waking up in a new world." His teenage years were met with the struggles of relocating to be near loved ones without having his mother's loving hand as a guide.

Rodney's story is another heart-breaking example of Gold Star children who faced a childhood they didn't ask for but were given as a result of the unthinkable sacrifices their loved ones made for freedom. Their courage is no

doubt a testament to the brave parents who raised them.

It is impossible to speak of Gold Star families without mentioning the parents who are robbed of the joy of seeing their children grow up and have families of their own. Danny Jordan from Elba, AL, is one such Gold Star parent. Danny's son, U.S. Army Sergeant Jason Jordan of the 101st Airborne Division, was killed in the Iraqi village of Tallifar on the night of July 20, 2003, when his humvee was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades. Even though it was not required for the 24-year-old, he chose to go on patrol that night because he would not ask his company to do something he wasn't willing to do himself.

Because of his service and sacrifice, Sergeant Jordan earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, a Purple Heart, and a Gold Star. Sergeant Jordan is honored in Elba at the "Lest They Be Forgotten" memorial at Veterans Memorial Park in Alba.

Danny describes his son as a natural-born leader who led by example. He said Jason was studying chemical engineering prior to his military service but joined the military because he felt there was a need. Danny said Jason was a hard worker who loved his hometown, his State, and his country. To cope with his grief, Danny drives the truck that once belonged to his son. For fathers like Danny, holding onto ordinary possessions of their loved ones helps them feel close even after they have passed on.

These are the stories of Americans who gave their lives for freedom's cause—mothers, brothers, sisters, and sons who became heroes to all of us. There are many, many others who have made the ultimate sacrifice for all of us and for our country. These heroes lived lives of impact, driven by a desire to serve their country at any cost. We tell their story to keep their memory alive and ensure their sacrifices are never, never forgotten. And as long as there are brave men and women like those I've mentioned today, we can continue to sing the national anthem—not with a question mark, but with a declaration that we are the "land of the free and the home of the brave."

As Memorial Day approaches, I hope we will take the time to honor America's fallen, along with the brave families who they left behind and always remember that our freedoms were won by men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

NOMINATION OF DARA LINDENBAUM

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, Dara Lindenbaum is the President's nominee to be a Member of the Federal Election Commission. We are scheduled to vote on that nomination today.

On April 6, the Committee on Rules and Administration held a hearing to consider this nominee. She shared her

credentials for the job and her understanding of the agency's mission and the role of a commissioner.

On May 3, she was favorably reported out of committee. I supported her nomination to be voted out of committee. The Federal Elections Commission plays a vital role for Campaign Finance Committees. As a former Secretary of State, I work with the FTC on a regular basis; and since that time, I have run in many Federal elections. I know how important a fully functioning FEC is to Federal candidates who need to avail themselves of the FEC's guidance and advisory opinions. I also know how important the stability of the agency is to the regulated community.

While the commissioners to the Federal Election Commission are, by design, partisan, it is unlikely that every Senator will agree with the views of all nominees. Ms. Lindenbaum has expressed a willingness to work with the other commissioners and find consensus to do the important work of the agency. I am a Republican and Ms. Lindenbaum is a Democrat. This Commission only works with if there is an equal number of Republicans and Democrats.

Sadly, with the three Republican nominees from the last administration, the vote on the floor was 49 to 43, 49 to 47, 50 to 46. These should not be partisan nominations. They are partisans nominated to a partisan job; and, frankly, we have to do a better job than 49 to 43, or 49 to 47, or 50 to 46, which, again, was the vote on the floor of President Trump's Republican nominees who are currently serving.

Ms. Lindenbaum enjoys the support of a bipartisan group of election law practitioners. Senator KLOBUCHAR and I received a letter from 30 practitioners on both sides of the aisle highlighting Ms. Lindenbaum's decade of relevant experience, especially her experience representing clients on matters of State and Federal campaign finance and election laws.

I look forward to supporting her nomination today. I hope many of my colleagues will join me in supporting her. This a commission, one, that doesn't work without an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, and it doesn't work if the commission doesn't have at least that equal number. Unless there are at least four commissioners, the Commission ceases to function. For too many months of the last dozen years, we had a Commission that wasn't fully functioning, couldn't make final decisions, couldn't issue opinions. I am looking forward to a six-member Commission.

I look forward to voting for Ms. Lindenbaum today when her nomination comes up early this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Senator from Colorado.

SOLAR ENERGY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am here today to spend a few minutes on an issue that is profoundly important to Colorado and, I would say, to the

Presiding Officer's State, as well, without being presumptuous, New Mexico, our neighbor to the south.

In March, the Biden administration launched an investigation into whether China is evading solar tariffs. That may seem fine on its face, but, in reality, it has taken a sledge hammer to the solar industry in Colorado and all across the country.

There are over 330 solar companies in my State. They have created nearly 7,000 jobs and driven close to \$5 billion of investment. Our companies are leading the Nation. Last year, we nearly quadrupled our deployment of solar capacity compared to 2017, and before the Biden administration's investigation, we were projected to double or even triple that capacity.

Washington should be lifting up Colorado's success as exactly the kind of progress we need to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, which we have to do. Instead, the Commerce Department's investigation is driving our solar industry out of business, because it could end with a massive expansion of tariffs that could drive up costs and cripple that sector.

Worse, the administration has said they might even apply these tariffs retroactively. Think about that. If you are a solar company in Colorado, you are already dealing with supply chain delays, you are already dealing with labor issues, and you are already dealing with rising prices and continued uncertainty over the clean energy tax credit, because this place can't get its act together to pass legislation that can give certainty to American business.

And now, on top of all of that, you face the prospect of your own government sending the price of your supplies through the roof when you need that least.

Businesses can't make decisions with that kind of uncertainty. Investors hate that level of uncertainty. And these aren't talking points. This is the reality on the ground.

In Colorado, the price of solar panels is already up 30 to 50 percent, and we know Colorado families are ultimately going to bear that cost, and that it is going to slow our energy transition. Many of our solar companies have begun hiring freezes. Some are considering major layoffs. Construction workers are losing hundreds of thousands of hours. Investors are pulling out of major projects. It has put hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs at risk, which is why I am here to ring this alarm.

More than 90 percent of solar companies surveyed in Colorado report "severe" or "devastating" harms to their businesses from this investigation by the Commerce Department.

In my State, we have major solar projects that are frozen in place, and if this continues, they may never move forward at all. A lot of these projects are in rural counties that are counting on the projects being built for jobs and

tax revenue. This is the last thing they need from Washington.

A 200-megawatt solar project in Pueblo was just canceled since the developer can't get the components they need. Another 150-megawatt project in northern Colorado has been delayed. A community solar developer told me they have canceled all of their new construction for the rest of the year.

Utilities in my State, like United Power and Tri-State, are ready to support hundreds of megawatts in new projects, but our solar companies can't submit bids because they don't have the certainty to do it.

One 80-megawatt project in Watkins is demobilized as they wait for solar panels. A project at Denver International Airport is indefinitely delayed, and I have heard story after story like this since this Commerce Department decision to have this investigation was made.

If you add it all up, this investigation has put at least 870 megawatts of new solar capacity at risk in Colorado, and it has put more than 50 gigawatts at risk across the entire country. That is enough to power nearly 10 million homes.

I cannot understand why the Biden administration is doing this. You can't say, on the one hand, we want to rapidly deploy clean energy and then use the other hand to stick a dagger in American solar. You can't say we are going to fight climate change and then punch American solar in the gut.

Last year, electricity generation from coal increased—increased—in this country for the first time since 2014. And at the same time that is happening, now what we are going to say is that we are going to cut the deployment of solar panels by a third or by half, as a result of this?

It is crazy. The administration should have viewed that alone—the fact that coal is up for the first time since 2014—they should have viewed that alone as a reason to increase our investments in clean energy, not pursue an investigation that is sabotaging one of the fastest growing sectors in Colorado and across the country.

I also don't understand why the administration would do this at this time when we have to find a way to replace Russian oil because of what Putin has done in Ukraine, and we should be replacing that with our own oil production and with our reserves in this country.

But you would think that supporting American solar would be on the top of the list as one of the best things we can do to diversify our energy and protect our security. Instead, the administration has paralyzed the industry with this investigation. It is a self-inflicted wound on America's clean energy leadership, our energy security, and our economy at the worst possible moment.

I have said this before, and I will say it again. I deeply believe that we need to restore critical supply chains, not