

Linda earned a degree from University of Arizona in 1980 before embarking on a career dedicated to public service. Linda began her service as a congressional staffer for Representative Millicent Fenwick from her home State of New Jersey. She then served the people of Illinois as a legislative aide for Representative Bob Michel. In 1989, Linda began her service at the U.S. Department of Education, engaging with State and local officials and congressional offices in both the Inter-governmental Affairs Office and the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, serving 9 of the 12 U.S. Secretaries of Education across political parties.

Linda has been an indispensable resource in my work on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee, of which I am a member. She assisted me to solve innumerable problems and concerns important to my constituents. She provided information about various administrations' implementation of important Federal programs, such as the Alaska Native Educational Equity Program, the Native American Language program, the State-Tribal Education Partnership program, and Impact Aid, in addition to providing insight into the Department's budget priorities. In addition to her expertise on these issues, she always approached my questions and concerns with the utmost diligence and attention, providing the support necessary for me to craft legislation that meets the needs of my constituents and the American people.

I am grateful for Linda's professionalism and dedication. I thank her and congratulate her on her upcoming retirement and wish her well in the future.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, on Monday, our Nation celebrated the life and legacy of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Like many Americans, it was a day of self-reflection for me. While leading a bipartisan delegation to Ukraine, I had a front-row seat to a nation struggling to hold on to its democracy in the face of a potential outside attack. This comes at a very poignant moment in America's history when we were reminded of the strength and fragility of our own democracy.

One year ago, a violent mob fueled by false claims of widespread election fraud stormed the U.S. Capitol. This was the most significant assault on the Capitol since the War of 1812. Although State and Federal judges ruled against efforts to overturn the results of the election, this lie of election fraud has continued to propagate. And now, those who didn't like the 2020 election results are trying to rewrite the rules.

Since the 2020 elections, Republican State lawmakers have passed an unprecedented number of bills to erode the authority of state and local elec-

tion officials. These new laws would strip secretaries of state of their authority, allow partisan ballot reviews, and even make local election officials criminally or financially liable for technical errors and actions, such as proactively sending out absentee ballot applications.

In total, 19 States have passed regressive laws that make it harder to vote and, in some extreme cases, may even allow Republican-controlled legislatures to overturn the results of a legitimate election by using false claims of voter fraud. In New Hampshire, over the past year, we have seen efforts to eliminate same-day voter registration, a measure that would disproportionately impact young voters, including college students and first-time voters.

Similarly, other efforts to prohibit students attending college in New Hampshire from voting in our State's elections would unduly burden—if not outright disenfranchise—many of those young voters. Other attempts to make voter registration more complicated have failed in court, including requirements for additional documentation for same-day registrants, and restrictions on which types of addresses are valid for registration.

These efforts are ongoing, with additional restrictive and burdensome measures being introduced as recently as the current legislative session. And it is not just our voter laws. Earlier this month, the Republican-controlled New Hampshire House approved a redistricting plan that can only be described as gerrymandering. Taken together, these measures represent a comprehensive and coordinated attempt to burden—or even deprive—certain Granite State citizens of their right to vote. Such blatant efforts to suppress the vote must not be tolerated.

The right to vote is one of the most fundamental and cherished principles of our democracy. The history of our Republic is marked by those seminal moments when we as a nation extended the right to cast a ballot to broader populations, thereby including more voices in our representative government: first after the Civil War with the 15th Amendment, then to women with the 19th Amendment, and then notably with the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As others have noted, the Voting Rights Act has historically drawn great bipartisan support for its reauthorization because the principles embodied in it go to the very heart of our democracy.

But the issues and challenges that are increasingly facing our voters are very real and very troubling—and we must take them seriously or risk eroding that most fundamental of rights. Making voter registration more difficult or making the process of voting more burdensome has disproportionate effects on some of the most vulnerable voters—whether those be young voters, communities of color, the poor, the homeless, among others. Eliminating or limiting opportunities for early vot-

ing, same-day registration, voting by mail, automatic registration, or the use of absentee ballots are all different pathways to the same pernicious effect—the suppression of the vote.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Together, these bills would standardize voting election laws across the country, expand voting access and restore key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that have been struck down or weakened by the Supreme Court.

The right to vote isn't determined by political affiliation. It is the most sacred right enshrined in the U.S. Constitution for every eligible American and ensures that our country is, as President Lincoln said, "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

I am deeply disappointed by the inability—or unwillingness—of this august body to come together today to take this basic step in defense of our democracy. We, the U.S. Senate, ought to be the foremost champions and defenders of democracy, but today, I fear that we have allowed partisan considerations to distract us from that duty.

We cannot afford to stay silent and ignore these measures that attempt to undo the progress that we have made over decades. We especially cannot stay silent when all of us here witnessed the horrific events of January 2021 and the attempt to undo a legitimate election. Protecting voting rights for every American is the first and irreplaceable step towards protecting our democracy. We must take it seriously, we must not let it wither in the dark, and we must not stay silent. It is far too important—and once damaged, it is far too hard to rebuild.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING POWELL VALLEY MILLWORK

• Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week, I recognize an outstanding Kentucky small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize the small business, Powell Valley Millwork of Clay City, KY, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Twenty-seven years ago Jim Thornberry and his son Jimmy left the mining industry behind in search of a new venture. Shortly thereafter, Powell Valley Millwork was founded. The Thornberry's started their mill with the desire to harvest a tangible product within a sustainable industry, and that mission has stayed at the heart of their business throughout their decades of growth and success.

The talent and substance of Powell Valley Millwork draws directly from our State, with the mill focusing on only one species of lumber: poplar. As

the State tree of Kentucky, poplar is an abundant resource within Appalachia, which makes their location in rural Clay City a prime spot for their operation. Often referred to as “the painter’s wood,” poplar is known for its clear grain, smooth milling, and paint-taking qualities. The versatile and fine nature of the wood allows Powell Valley Millwork to supply consumers with a wide variety of interior-trim products, such as stretcher bars, door and window jambs, stair parts, cabinetry components, primed finger-joint interior trim, and more. In creating all these products, the Powell Valley millworkers make sure nothing goes to waste. Poplar can be safely used as animal bedding which means the mill’s offcuts, those that are not already being used to fuel the company’s wood drying kilns, are turned into shavings. These shavings are then bagged and shipped out by the truck load to be sold in a wide variety of retail outlets.

This Powell County mill maintains their technology at a topnotch standard. In 2019 the owners invested in a new addition to the team: a sophisticated scanning rough mill line from Eagle Machinery & Supply, Inc. The new rough mill line is able to process 65,000 board feet of lumber in a single 8-hour shift with only six people required to operate it. The joint project between Powell and Eagle, both family companies, demonstrates that U.S. machinery manufacturers can successfully compete with Europeans in providing world-class technology to the North American wood processing industry.

The Thornberrys keep their eye on efficiency and progress, opening up ownership of the company to experts outside the family, including Brian Lambert, Powell Valley Mill’s General manager, and Dale Budke, the mill’s operations manager. As fellow owners of the company, these gentlemen provide the expertise necessary for navigating the growing Kentucky lumber industry. In 2019 Powell Valley Millwork acquired the Metrie Poplar manufacturing facility in nearby Jeffersonville, KY. With a new 125,000-square-foot location only 12 miles from their original facility, the two locations utilize their natural synergies to support the needs of a diverse customer base across North America in full truck and railroad quantities.

Powell Valley Millwork is a testament to the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Kentuckians. Drawing from our beautiful natural resources and employing over 200 local men and women, this business illustrates some of the best qualities Kentucky has to offer—fine craftsmanship and dedicated hard work. Powell Valley Millwork is a decades-old dream the Thornberrys had when they left the mining industry, a dream that has grown beyond what they had imagined. Small businesses like Powell Valley are the core of small towns across Kentucky, and like the poplars they use in their mill, their

roots grow deep to help our communities flourish. Congratulations to the Thornberrys and the entire Powell Valley team. I wish them the best of luck and look forward to watching their continued growth and success in Kentucky.●

MARYLAND SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH

● Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, devotion, commitment, resilience—these are just a few of the words that describe the professionals who comprise Maryland’s 24 local boards of education.

The dedicated public servants who lead the school systems in Maryland counties and Baltimore City act with deep commitment to their communities and their time-intensive school board duties. Maryland school board members make critical budget and planning decisions, adopt policies to create supportive learning environments for all students, engage with parents, students, school staff, and other community stakeholders, work closely with superintendents, respond to crises, and undergo ongoing training to carry out effective governance, continue to grow as leaders, and stay up-to-date on the latest best practices.

As devoted professionals who serve students, school systems, and their communities at large, Maryland school board members face an array of daunting challenges every day, challenges made significantly more difficult and complex during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet Maryland’s 24 school boards have consistently risen to these challenges, working to ensure excellence in public education throughout the State.

School board members come from all backgrounds and professions. They may not agree on every issue, but they unite and volunteer to serve under the strong conviction that Maryland students come first.

Because of the extraordinary, continuing commitment of those who serve on our school boards to helping Maryland students grow, thrive, and excel each day—and with my ongoing commitment to Maryland public education in mind—I am proud to recognize January as Maryland School Board Recognition Month.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4673. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the automatic enrollment of eligible veterans in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

At 1:53 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 452. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Willie O’Ree, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions and commitment to hockey, inclusion, and recreational opportunity.

S. 2959. An act to provide that, due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, applications for impact aid funding for fiscal year 2023 may use certain data submitted in the fiscal year 2022 application.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4673. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the automatic enrollment of eligible veterans in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

ENROLLED BILLS PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, January 20, 2022, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bills:

S. 452. An act to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Willie O’Ree, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions and commitment to hockey, inclusion, and recreational opportunity.

S. 2959. An act to provide that, due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, applications for impact aid funding for fiscal year 2023 may use certain data submitted in the fiscal year 2022 application.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2305. A bill to enhance cybersecurity education (Rept. No. 117-59).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted: