

were old enough, she returned to school, to Notre Dame College of Maryland, now known as Notre Dame of Maryland University, to earn a bachelor's degree in fine arts. She is a gifted artist.

Renee and Jonas found many opportunities for volunteer work and leadership roles through the Associate Jewish Charities. Her influence and reach in local civic life and politics continued to expand to the point where I knew I needed her on my staff as a constituent liaison. When I entered the House of Representatives in 1987, Renee became a caseworker, focusing on healthcare and senior citizen issues. She has had a special interest and insight into these issues after caring for her mother, Rose Katz, who lived to be 105, and her husband, who had a progressive illness before he passed away in 2020. Since I joined the Senate, Renee has been an indefatigable field representative for me on health and senior issues and a liaison to the Jewish community.

Try as we might, Senators cannot be in two places at once. We depend on staff to represent us. If you were to Google Renee, you would find numerous articles and pictures of her representing me in Baltimore and around the State, at healthcare fairs and other events, where she shared her knowledge, contacts, and other information with constituents who needed Federal assistance of some kind. She particularly relished helping people to understand and navigate the Affordable Care Act.

Much of what Senators do can seem ethereal or intangible. Staffers like Renee represent where "the rubber hits the road." Casework and the sort of outreach Renee performed is intensely personal. Renee helped people receive their Social Security retirement, Social Security disability, and supplemental security income payments and Medicare benefits. She excelled because she is empathetic and has a passion for service, for problem-solving, and for strategic thinking. If, for any reason, she was unable to offer assistance—which was exceedingly rare—she had a knack for finding agencies that the rest of us never knew existed for a referral. She would never end a call with, "I'm sorry, we can't help you." She always went the proverbial extra mile.

Another keen interest of Renee's has been science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—STEM—education. Renee was instrumental in helping to establish STEM programs for underserved students in schools across Maryland and the annual STEM Expo at Morgan State University. She calls these projects "my baby," and educators affectionately refer to Renee as "the STEM Queen."

Renee has worked for me longer than any other member of my staff. It was inevitable that I would consider her as a member of my extended family and vice versa. I have been so fortunate to have her by my side for nearly 40 years.

The positive difference she has made in so many people's lives is incalculable. She has run the race and is ready to retire—sort of. Renee is not someone who lets the grass grow under her feet so she will return to the office occasionally as a "senior intern," helping answer the phones and pitching in on casework. I am grateful we will stay connected. But she will have more time to devote to her family and friends and her avocation, which is painting. Renee sees the beauty in the people she has faithfully served and in the natural world, which she captures on canvas. On behalf of my Senate colleagues and the people of Maryland, I want to express my undying gratitude to Renee for nearly four decades of exemplary service, congratulate her on her retirement, and extend my best wishes to her as she turns the page, paint brushes in hand, to a new chapter in a life well-lived.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT A. HAND

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to Robert "Bob" Hand as he retires this week after 40 years of faithful service to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission. The Commission is an independent U.S. Government agency Congress created in 1975 to monitor and encourage compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and other commitments undertaken since then by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE. The Commission consists of nine members from the House of Representatives, nine members from the U.S. Senate, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce. The House and Senate share the positions of chair and cochair and rotate every 2 years, when a new Congress convenes. For the Commission to function, it relies on expert professional staff who must be as nonpartisan as they are expert in their fields.

I am, during this 117th Congress, the chair of the Helsinki Commission, though for these remarks it is important to note that I have served on the Commission since the 103rd Congress, dating back to my time in the House of Representatives. When I joined the Commission in 1993, as the several Balkan Wars were unfolding in the former Yugoslavia, Bob Hand was already the go-to person on Capitol Hill for news and information—and explanations—of what was happening in the Western Balkans. I have worked with Bob for 29 years now. I have relied on him for 29 years. I have respected his intellect and his prodigious work ethic for 29 years.

This month, Bob retires as the longest serving staff person on the Helsinki Commission, with 40 years of service. Bob earned a B.A. in international relations and Russian area studies, with a minor in economics, from the School of International Service at American

University in 1983 but actually started at the Commission in 1982 as an intern. After he graduated, he quickly moved to full-time staff in 1983. Throughout the years, he has shown exceptional professionalism and has always been willing to go above and beyond the call to do whatever was necessary to ensure that the Commission served mandate defended human rights. His deep expertise on the Western Balkans has made him renowned among policy professionals in Washington, and his appearances on Voice of America and TOP channel in Albania nearly made him a household name there.

Bob worked tirelessly throughout the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s to ensure that members of the Helsinki Commission had the best information and analysis of developments when formulating legislation and policy responses to address the aggression, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing which took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995. He helped to document these atrocities through numerous hearings and briefings and reports. He also advised Helsinki Commissioners as they pressed U.S. leadership to use NATO assets to end the siege of Sarajevo and protect UN-designated safe havens and to lift the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bob was an early proponent of the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia—ICTY—to hold those responsible for atrocities to account, including for the Srebrenica genocide, which he has ensured the Commission commemorates each year in memory of those murdered. He has also ensured that other cases stay at the forefront of policy attention, particularly the Bytyqi brothers, three Albanian-Americans whose murdered bodies were found in Serbia in 2001 and for whom Bob has never stopped seeking justice.

Bob is also an expert on Albania, and he helped organize a Helsinki Commission visit to Albania in 1990, the first U.S. Government agency visit to that nation since relations were severed in 1946. He returned to Albania numerous times over the years, observed most of the country's elections over the past two decades, and through his thoughtful and in-depth analysis of political developments in the country, became a respected commentator on Albanian radio and television.

Bob served on numerous U.S. delegations to OSCE Meetings, observed dozens of elections, and he even served as a mission member on one of the OSCE's first field missions: the OSCE Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina, stationed in Novi Pazar in 1993. He is not just one of our Nation's top experts on the Western Balkans; he is also a fount of knowledge on the OSCE itself, and especially the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly, PA.

Bob has served for many years as the Secretary of the U.S. Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly. In that role,

he deftly ensured that our delegation was not only well-prepared both logistically and substantively, but also through working diplomatically with other delegations, he ensured that our proposals, resolutions, and amendments had the best possible chance of being successfully adopted. Most recently at the OSCE PA annual session in Birmingham, Bob worked diligently with several other delegations to ensure that a critical resolution condemning Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine was adopted with the strongest possible language.

Bob has also always been a voice of reason, humanity, and fairness. He did not refrain from criticizing U.S. policy when it was warranted and several times advocated that the United States proactively discuss its own shortcomings with other OSCE countries, including after reports of prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, surfaced in 2003. Among Commission staff, he was always quick to support his colleagues, but also did not shy away from debating the pros and cons of ideas. Above all, Bob has always sought to do what is right—for the Helsinki Commission, for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, for the United States, and for the promotion of human rights, democracy, and rule of law throughout the 57 nations of the OSCE.

A little over 2 years ago, I paid tribute to another Commission staffer, Erika Schlager, on her retirement after 34 years of service. It so happens that Bob and Erika are husband and wife. Bob and Erika have devoted their lives—75 years and counting—to defending and promoting human rights. They have been passionate and remarkably effective advocates for the world's downtrodden and disenfranchised.

The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu, former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, remarked, "It means a great deal to those who are oppressed to know that they are not alone." For the past 40 years, oppressed people around the world, but especially in Eastern and Central Europe, knew they weren't alone because Bob Hand was fighting for them. I know I speak on behalf of my Senate colleagues, my fellow Commissioners, and Bob's wide circle of professional colleagues and admirers when I say that I will miss him. I am grateful for his stalwart service and wish him all the best for his future endeavors.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO TRACIE TEXAS SHIFFLETT

• Mr. PAUL. Madam President, after more than 25 years of service—first as an officer, then as executive director of the Louisville Metro Police Foundation, LMPF—Tracie Shifflett has announced that she will retire from the foundation in September.

The LMPF is an independent, private nonprofit organization, the only orga-

nization authorized to raise funds on behalf of the Louisville Metro Police Department. LMPF supports special community programs to strengthen relationships between police and the communities they serve, purchase equipment and training programs, and grants for the Officers in Distress Program.

Shifflett took on leadership of the LMPF in 2016 after retiring from the Louisville Metro Police Department as a lieutenant over the training academy. The rank of lieutenant is the highest achievable rank on your merit within the department.

"I always felt our officers were like my kids," Shifflett said. "I felt like my work with the Foundation was a way I could truly help them."

During her tenure as its leader, the foundation has grown from less than \$700,000 in total assets to \$2.4 million. Tracie dealt with many challenges and faced all of them with grace, love, and a great sense of humor. She has put her own life on hold many times to be there for "her" officers, the board, and the Louisville community. She has repeatedly set new records for fundraising at the LMPF's annual event by sharing the unvarnished truth of what officers face every day while serving. Her passion both while serving on LMPD and for the LMPF was to make sure "her babies" were taken care of, that they felt loved, and had the support needed to continue to make a difference every day.

"I'm especially proud that we have been able to positively impact at least 50 officer families each year that have faced injury, medical diagnosis, or other critical needs," Shifflett said. "Since 2016, we have granted \$1.7 million to officer families who are facing life-altering difficulty."

Some of the foundation's key accomplishments under Shifflett's leadership include training programs, purchasing equipment, and the Officers in Distress Program.

Tracie has partnered with many officers and helped to strengthen their bonds in the community with programs like Shop with a Cop, Gang Resistance, and Education Training. The department has also helped build and provide bedding to 100 kids in the community, purchased new bleachers for the California Community Center, and launched the Help Us Give fund. She also secured funding for seven mounted patrol horses, purchased nine K-9s for patrol work and narcotics detection, some of which went on to win the National K-9 Olympics Competition, and obtained K-9 trauma kits and K-9 protective vests for all LMPD K-9s. In her last few weeks with the foundation, she secured two Kid ID Kits for LMPD to use in the community.

Jim Ellis, chairman of the Louisville Metro Police Foundation, said the following about Tracie in her evaluation:

"Tracie has become the go-to person for many members of LMPD when they have a gripe, concern, or problem. I be-

lieve that is a great demonstration of the trust the officers have in our Foundation and our Executive Director. Tracie receives inquiries from other Foundations around the county on how we implement and apply checks and balances to each of our grants. Tracie maintains confidentiality with sensitive and life-altering data and information that comes into the Foundation. This confidentiality helps protect the safety of the LMPD and the Foundation's board members. Tracie is unique in that she is a former police officer and understands what the men and women of the LMPD want and need to make Louisville safer. She lets them know what is possible to achieve and what may be beyond the Board's ability to obtain or provide. She hates to deny any request, but if it is denied, she works to solve the problem. Tracie has become somewhat of a parental figure for many members of LMPD."

Almost every targeted foundation project was obtained under her leadership. One of the things that Tracie was proud to have accomplished during her tenure at the foundation is securing funding for high-velocity bulletproof vests for every LMPD officer, which recently saved the life of an officer. Another highlight of her career was receiving her master's degree in education.

She is incredibly proud of her close family: her mother, Judy, her late father, Benjamin, her son, Ben, her daughter, Alex, and her husband, John, a retired police officer.

I am proud to salute Tracie for her dedicated career in making our community a safer place to live.●

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.)

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 4822. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide for additional disclosure requirements for corporations, labor organizations, Super PACs and other entities, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with