

was in terms of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF. If you don't know what that is, then ask any of your county commissioners or Governors or others who take advantage of it, township trustees, community leaders, and, certainly, conservation groups, because this is funding that helps with matching funding—typically, local, State, sometimes other Federal funding—to ensure that areas are protected, that parks can be built, and so on.

Congress is very good about saying: We are all for that. We are going to—what we call around here—authorize the legislation to do that, but then we didn't provide the money.

What RICHARD said over the years was: Well, if this is such a good idea, why don't we fund it like we are supposed to?

That was actually falling on deaf ears for quite a while, I think it is fair to say, but RICHARD was persistent.

I recall being at the White House signing ceremony for that larger legislation, the Great American Outdoors Act, knowing that one of the most significant elements of that was full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. That was because of one Senator, and that is RICHARD BURR.

So, RICHARD, it has been a pleasure to serve alongside of you. I wish you and Brooke, William, and Tyler the very best going forward.

I suspect if you want to see RICHARD, you are going to have to go to his beloved North Carolina shore, particularly, the Outer Banks, where you might see him fishing for tuna or doing something else very productive.

So Godspeed, my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, we have heard a lot of great comments. First, we heard great words from Senator BURR. I hope that people yield and learn from the lessons.

We have also learned a lot about his body of work over the 28 years that he has been in the House and the Senate.

He mentioned Speaker Boehner earlier, who was probably crying as he listened to RICHARD's comments. I have a tendency, when I see a friend leaving, to get a little sappy too. So to make sure that we keep Speaker Boehner on the leaderboard for the one who cries the most, I want to talk a little bit about our relationship.

We knew each other before I came here. I was speaker of the house when I first met him. But I learned a lot from him over the last 8 years, and I have seen him work in a way that is unique among many Members.

I feel like you sum up RICHARD BURR by his patience, his practicality, and his persistence.

He is a very patient person. He doesn't think in terms of, we have got to get this done this Congress. He looks at the reality of the situation, and he just continues to build support until he gets it done.

He is practical. He looks at something, the face of the policy, and he decides whether it makes sense. And he is willing to take the political hits to get good policy done—policy, to use RICHARD's words, that has purpose and meaning.

And, man, is he persistent. We have had a lot of people talk about the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I watched him work this, and he worked it for quite some time. And when it was finally set up to get passed, he was making a few people and his own conference a little bit uncomfortable because of his encyclopedic knowledge of procedure.

I can remember one scene when he was walking down this aisle, when we were working to get agreement, that it reminded me of a scene in a western comedy from many years ago.

People down there were saying: Don't shoot him; it will just make him mad.

He knows how to get things done. I have learned a lot from him, and I am going to miss him. But with all due respect to John Boehner, I am going to have your friendship for the rest of my life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, interspersed among the farewell speeches, which are always enjoyable to listen to as people reminisce about their time in the Senate and that causes all of us to reflect on our role and what we have done to help our country and help our constituents—and no one has done it better than the Senator from North Carolina—we also have a few things to do before we break for the holidays. Perhaps the next important thing that we have to do is to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, which, of course, provides the authorities necessary to strengthen our Armed Forces, to modernize our defense, and to maintain the peace.

This year's Defense authorization act includes a significant increase in defense funding, which, in light of the range of threats confronting our country and the world, is appropriate, coming in roughly at \$45 billion above the White House's most recent budget request.

This is a bipartisan increase in the authorization, which is the appropriate role of Congress to tell the White House: We think you have low-balled the number, and we think the threats deserve even more support in terms of the funding.

These investments are absolutely critical to our military and our national security, but we all know this legislation is more than just about funding levels. It includes a range of bipartisan bills to support those who wear the uniform and their families, our allies, and our national defense as a whole.

It really includes a lot of different bills in this umbrella of the National Defense Authorization Act. One exam-

ple of one of those components is the Protecting Our Servicemembers through Proven Methods Act, which I introduced with Senator SINEMA of Arizona and a bipartisan group of colleagues.

The goal of this bill is to focus on proven methods that empower military leaders to prevent sexual assault and harassment in the military from happening in the ranks.

The RAND Corporation, the think tank, published a 10-step approach to strengthen sexual assault prevention in the military, and step one is all about data. We need a clear picture of the problem before we can craft the most appropriate and effective solutions.

Our bipartisan bill specifically answers that recommendation by requiring the Department of Defense to collect data on the causes behind sexual assault, harassment, and domestic violence in the military.

That data will better inform our decision making within the Department and beyond. It will help guide our work in the Senate, too, where there is a bipartisan commitment to ending sexual assault and harassment in the military. And I hope it leads to stronger prevention efforts across the board.

Our bill requires the Department of Defense to confer with universities and public health institutions to best identify the practices that will combat these abuses, whether that is in the workplace or on college campuses. Reliable data will then inform our prevention efforts and help stop those acts before they occur.

We go to great lengths to keep our servicemembers safe on the battlefield, and these efforts need to extend to every part of their service. I am glad this legislation was included in this year's National Defense Authorization Act, and I appreciate all of our colleagues who fought to make that possible.

The Defense authorization bill provides a great opportunity to support our friends and allies around the world, and this bill takes big steps to further support Ukraine against the outrageous invasion effected by the Russian Federation on February 24 of this year.

We know that the United States can't focus on countering Russia or supporting Ukraine; we need to do both. Over the last 10 months, we supplied Ukraine with critical military assistance, and this year's Defense Authorization Act will give Ukrainian soldiers even more resources to keep up the fight.

And I am glad this bill also includes a provision which will impose greater costs on Mr. Putin and the Russian Federation. Since Russia launched its attack on Ukraine, the United States and our allies have imposed sanctions on Russian businesses and oligarchs and cut off Russian banks from the global financial system.

But, in typical fashion, Russia has found a loophole in the current sanctions. It has taken a page out of Venezuela's playbook by using the purchase and sale of gold to bring in cash. The Russian Federation started buying gold to offset the devaluation of the ruble and then selling that gold on international markets for high-value currency. In short, Russia is laundering money through the gold market, and we need to put a stop to it.

That is why I introduced the Stop Russian GOLD Act with Senators KING, HASSAN, and HAGERTY to end this practice. This legislation would apply sanctions to anyone who helps Russia finance their illegal war against Ukraine by buying or selling or transporting Russian blood gold. That means anyone who buys or transports gold from Russia's central bank holdings would be the target of sanctions themselves, a deterrent for anyone considering doing this sort of business with Russia.

So we need to do everything we can to cut the financing to Putin's war machine, and this is one important way to do it, while we continue to support Ukraine in their will to repel and defeat Russian aggression and invasion of their sovereign territory.

I am glad the NDAA will build on the work we have done to strengthen our semiconductor supply chain. I know we have all learned a lot about the vulnerability of our technology, everything from our television sets to our computers to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, or even our cell phones—the threat of high-end semiconductors being cut off at supply.

And over the last couple of years, we have done big things, made major strides to bolster domestic chipmaking. As our colleagues know, this is a matter of both economic and national security. Made-in-America semiconductors, microcircuits, mean more jobs, investments, and more growth here in the United States, and a strong domestic supply means we aren't at the mercy of other countries for our most critical technology.

Congress funded the CHIPS Act earlier this summer, and we are already seeing a glimpse of the sort of investments it will bring to the United States, most notably in places like Arizona and Ohio but also in New York and in Texas and in many other places around the country.

There is more we can and should do to safeguard our critical supply chains. At this moment, Chinese companies with known connections to the Chinese Communist Party are actively selling semiconductors to companies that do business with the U.S. Government. That is a huge red flag and a major vulnerability. It puts us at risk of cyber attacks and threatens the disclosure of sensitive information.

And our reliance on these Chinese companies is a risk in and of itself. If the Chinese Communist Party wanted to starve the United States of our access to chips, it could use these compa-

nies to help in that effort. With the snap of President Xi's finger, they could cut off the supply of chips to companies that supply products to the U.S. Government.

We are well aware of the risks associated with reliance on other countries for semiconductors, which is why this has been such a big priority over the last couple of years. Now we need to ensure that the U.S. Government isn't purchasing chips from companies connected with the Chinese Communist Party.

U.S. military assets shouldn't be threatened by using these chips, which could be sabotaged by the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Republic of China. Senators SCHUMER and WICKER and I have worked together on an amendment which will address this vulnerability. Our amendment would prohibit the U.S. Government from doing business with Chinese companies with known links to the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese military. It specifically mentions three companies with known links.

This ban will be phased in, in a responsible way, to ensure it doesn't lead to paralyzing supply chain disruptions; but once it is fully implemented, it will ensure that taxpayer dollars are not spent on chips from Chinese military contractors. I am glad this amendment made its way into the NDAA, and I want to thank Senator SCHUMER and Senator WICKER for working together to make this possible.

Those are just a few of the pieces of legislation contained within the National Defense Authorization Act, but it also includes other important provisions too. It includes bipartisan legislation I introduced to prohibit former members of the intelligence community from working for our foreign adversaries, including state sponsors of terrorism.

What we have seen is occasionally when people retire, they are hired by other foreign governments with the knowledge that they take along with them which came in the form of protecting the United States but could then be used by our adversaries to endanger the United States.

We also, in the NDAA, amended existing drug trafficking laws to crack down on countries like China that are known to export precursor chemicals used in deadly drugs like fentanyl, the synthetic opioid that took the lives of 71,000 Americans last year alone.

This also includes—the National Defense Authorization Act—the work product of the Environment and Public Works Committee, known as WRDA, the Water Resources Development Act; and, specifically, so far as it applies to my State of Texas, this bill authorizes the Texas Coastal Spine Project, which will safeguard communities and critical industries along the Texas gulf coast against inevitable future hurricanes.

The bill also requires the President to document, catalog, and preserve evi-

dence of war crimes committed in Ukraine so that justice will eventually be served.

I want to commend Senators INHOFE and REED for the bipartisan work that they have done on the Defense authorization bill. My only regret is it has taken us this long to get to it since it came out of the Armed Services Committee last July, but we know that they have done their best under the circumstances to include bipartisan recommendations and legislation that will keep our country strong and help maintain the peace.

We know that both Senators REED and INHOFE have fought tough headwinds getting the bill to the floor, and my hope is that tomorrow we will have a chance to vote on it, perhaps with a handful of amendments. This is a strong bill that will support our men and women in uniform and their families. It will help preserve our readiness against threats anywhere in the world and help preserve our national security.

I look forward to casting my vote in support of that bill, perhaps as early as tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I would ask consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise as so many of us are talking about today and reflecting upon the massacre in Newtown, CT, Sandy Hook Elementary School, 10 years ago today.

I rise for two purposes: One is to commemorate those who lost their lives that day—especially the children, 20 children, as well as 6 adults—to remember each of them today but also to commend and salute the work done by families and so many others across this country to make some measure of progress, limited though it has been, to reduce the likelihood of more gun violence across the country.

I wanted to start, though, Madam President, by reading the names and the ages of those who perished on that day at Sandy Hook Elementary School. For each individual, I will read their name and then the age they were on that day.

First, Charlotte Bacon, 6 years old; Olivia Engel, 6; Dylan Hockley, 6 years old; Madeleine Hsu, 6; Catherine Hubbard, 6; Jesse Lewis, 6; Ana Marquez-Greene, 6; James Mattioli, 6; Emilie Parker, 6; Jack Pinto, 6 years old; Noah Pozner, 6; Caroline Previdi, 6; Jessica Rekos, 6; Avielle Richman, 6 years old; Benjamin Wheeler, 6; Allison Wyatt, 6; Daniel Barden, 7 years old; Josephine Gay, 7; Chase Kowalski, 7; Grace McDonnell, 7, just age 7.

They are the children, and here are the adults who were killed on that day: