

I was able to help address the sea lamprey problem in Lake Champlain by bringing NOAA and Great Lakes Fishery Commission funding to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement sea lamprey control. The program is an unmitigated success, with sea lamprey control goals being met and more importantly, with a spectacular rebound in the number, size, and health of salmon, lake trout, and other large fish species. Over the past decade, I have brought the funds needed to build the GLFC Lake Champlain program to \$10 million each year, supporting research, education, and implementation work in New York and Vermont.

The U.S. Army Corps Lake Champlain Ecosystem Restoration Program, more commonly known as the 542 program, was put in place at my request in legislation in 2000. That program has been reauthorized with expanded funding authorization this year and should continue to benefit the lake for many years to come.

My exploration of Lake Champlain shipwrecks as a diver sparked an interest in the history and heritage of the Champlain basin that led to my co-sponsoring the bill that created the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership in 2006. That program continues to provide funding and technical support through the National Park Service around cultural heritage in Vermont and New York.

I also supported the construction of the new UVM research vessel which I was proud to see named for Marcelle. The boat will begin service in 2023 and is sure to carry generations of students and lake researchers across the water for years to come. The Patrick and Marcelle Leahy Center for Lake Champlain is also in an excellent position to educate students of all ages, from 2 to 92 years old, about science and Lake Champlain.

In conclusion, I am pleased to have been able to bring Federal support to the restoration and protection of Lake Champlain throughout my career and even more proud that measures I have helped put in place should keep multiple Lake Champlain programs operating for many years after I return to Vermont to live near the shore of this Great Lake.

RECOGNIZING THE EAST ST. LOUIS FLYERS' 2022 FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on November 26, the East St. Louis Flyers—Illinois' winningest high school football program—defeated the Prairie Ridge Wolves 57–7. By handing Prairie Ridge their first loss of the season, the East St. Louis Flyers took home the Illinois High School Association's Class 6A Championship, the school's 10th State football title.

As an Assumption High School Pioneer and native son of East St. Louis, I went to school just a few minutes down the road from East St. Louis Sen-

ior High School—or East Side as we called it. Even back then, East Side was a dominant force in high school athletics. So much so that in 1960, when the Assumption Pioneers managed to pull off an upset win against the East Side Flyers at Parsons Field, our entire school was given the day off to celebrate. While Assumption High School closed in 1989, East St. Louis Senior High has fought on and is now the last remaining high school in my hometown, serving about 1,500 students. Over the years, they have continued to excel in athletics, enjoying success thanks to coaching legend Bob Shannon, who led the Flyers to six Illinois State championships and two national championships during his time as head coach.

East St. Louis is a city that has fallen on hard times, a story all too common in this Nation. What used to be an economic powerhouse on the Mighty Mississippi with flourishing meatpacking, rail, and manufacturing industries, the City of Champions now struggles with frequent flooding, limited economic opportunity, a shrinking tax base, and bouts of high crime. Yet despite these challenges, the Flyers of East St. Louis Senior High were able to persevere and fly on to win their 10th State football championship.

After falling to the Cary-Grove Trojans by one point in the 2021 Class 6A Championship game, there was no guarantee that the Flyers would make it back to the State championship. The Flyers had a rough start to the 2022 season, losing two of their first three games after dropping contests to St. Frances Academy from Baltimore, MD, and a road game against the Creekside Seminoles of Fairburn, GA. A testament to the team's resilience, the Flyers would go on an 11-win tear, which included 6 shutouts thanks to the Flyers' stout defense. In the 4th game of that 11-game winning streak—an 80–0 win over the Alton Redbirds—Flyers' Head Coach Darren Sunkett notched his 200th career win. This milestone caught the attention of a coaching legend, none other than the University of Alabama's Nick Saban, who reached out to congratulate Coach Sunkett. After such a dominant victory, you might expect the team would celebrate and rest on their laurels. Instead, after one of the week's grueling 3-hour practices, Coach Sunkett made his team run sprints due to poor coverage on one of the kick-offs. It was back to hard work.

Despite his demand for excellence and attention to detail, Coach Sunkett knows that success on the field is not all that matters. He wants his players to be well-rounded and has designed a program to help his players succeed on and off the field. Having grown up with little chance to explore outside his hometown of Camden, NJ, Coach Sunkett makes every effort that his players experience life outside of the 89 blocks of East St. Louis, often taking his team on the road to test themselves against the Nation's best teams.

Football is much more than touchdowns or tackles, first downs or sacks, or even wins and losses. It is about collective effort, a group of people coming together to achieve something more than what they could achieve on their own. For many of the young men of the East St. Louis Flyers football team, football represents opportunity. An opportunity to make a better life for themselves and their families, get a quality education from one of the Nation's leading universities, and get a degree that will open up many more opportunities. What these young men have been able to do this season, despite the odds being stacked against them, is nothing short of remarkable.

To the players: whether you suit up and play at a top-tier collegiate program next fall or you never play another down of football, remember: You will always be champions. Congratulations on bringing the 2022 Illinois High School Association's Class 6A Championship home to East St. Louis.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES M. INHOFE

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise to pay tribute to our colleague and friend, Senator JAMES INHOFE. There are few Senators more conservative than Senator INHOFE. And yet he is always working across the aisle, collegially, on issues where he can find bipartisan agreement. I have enjoyed working with him on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. We disagree on most of the "Environment" portion of the committee's jurisdiction, but we certainly agree on the "Public Works" portion. Because of his leadership, EPW is "the committee that gets things done," as he likes to put it.

Senator INHOFE served in the U.S. Army from 1957 to 1958. He served in the Oklahoma State Legislature for 10 years, including 4 as senate minority leader. He was elected mayor of Tulsa three times. He won election to the U.S. House of Representatives four times. And he won election to the Senate six times. He has served as chair and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Armed Services Committee.

Senator INHOFE has had a long career in public service, but he also worked in the insurance industry, real estate development, and one of his greatest passions, aviation. Senator INHOFE is a pilot, with over 11,000 flight hours. I believe he is the only Member of Congress to pilot his own plane—a twin-engine Cessna—around the world, something he did in 16 days in 1991, recreating Wiley Post's historic 1931 journey. He is one of general aviation's most dedicated advocates and a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, AOPA.

If you want an example of grace under pressure, in 1999, Senator INHOFE lost the propeller off his Grumman Tiger May 8 but made a successful emergency landing at Claremore, OK.

As AOPA reported at the time, “In a strange coincidence, the propeller was found by one of Inhofe’s high school classmates from Tulsa, who called the airport asking if anyone had lost a prop. G. W. Curtiss returned the prop to the airport and reunited with the senator, whom he hadn’t seen in some 40 years.”

Senator INHOFE is a rightfully proud of his role on the Armed Services Committee in producing the National Defense Authorization Act, NDAA, each year, and it is fitting that this year’s NDAA bears his name. He has worked especially hard on building U.S. relations with countries in Africa and led the effort to establish AFRICOM as a separate combatant command in 2007. I have appreciated his strong support for Israel and for cosponsoring my measure, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act.

On EPW, I have enjoyed collaborating with Senator INHOFE on surface transportation and water development bills. For many years, Senator INHOFE was the only Republican to join my Dear Colleague letters to fund the Water Resources Development Acts of 2014 through 2020, with the grant programs under those bills receiving steady increases in their appropriated levels. These increases have accrued to State Revolving Funds for wastewater and drinking water but also to smaller, objective-specific programs to reduce lead in drinking water, for instance.

Senator INHOFE and his beloved wife Kay celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary this Monday. He is devoted to her and to his 20 children and grandchildren. I know he is eager to spend more time with them.

There is much that Senator INHOFE and I disagree on, but we both know that our friendship transcends those disagreements by a wide margin, and, as a result, we have accomplished much together where we agree, especially on water infrastructure. I am grateful for our friendship and for his public service spanning eight decades—from his Army service in the 1950s to today—and wish him a happy, well-deserved retirement.

TRIBUTE TO ROY BLUNT

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise to pay tribute to our colleague and, more importantly, my dear friend, Senator ROY BLUNT. By Senate standards, Senator BLUNT has had a brief career—two terms—but he has been extraordinarily effective. I know I speak on behalf of all of our colleagues when I say we will miss Senator BLUNT’s calming influence and steady hand at the helm of good old-fashioned bipartisan legislating.

Senator BLUNT is native Missourian. He grew up on a dairy farm, so he knows about hard work. He received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in the State. He entered public service at the age of 22 when he became the Greene County Clerk and Election Official, a post he held for 12 years.

In 1984, Senator BLUNT was elected to serve as Missouri’s secretary of state, the first Republican to hold that position in 50 years. In 1996, he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives and was reelected six times. I got to know him while we both served in the House.

Before Senator BLUNT was elected to serve in Congress, he was a high school history teacher. He also taught at his alma mater, Southwest Baptist University, and served as its president from 1993 to 1996.

Senator BLUNT was well-schooled in civics and governance when he arrived in Congress, so it is no surprise that he quickly rose through the ranks to hold Republican leadership posts both in the House and in the Senate. He became the majority whip in the House earlier in his career than any predecessor over the previous 80 years. He entered Senate Republican leadership as a freshman.

I have had the privilege and the pleasure of working with Senator BLUNT on many issues, chief of which is the New Markets Tax Credit program, NMTC. We have worked together since 2015 to extend and increase the allocation for the New Markets Tax Credit program, which provides a 39 percent Federal tax credit for businesses or economic development projects in areas with poverty rates of at least 20 percent, or median incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median, driving investment and strengthening communities in areas that need it most. In Missouri, I understand that more than 500 projects have benefited from the tax credit, covering everything from afterschool programs and affordable housing to research hubs and local small businesses.

Senator BLUNT and I serve as co-chairs of the Atlantic Council’s U.S.-Colombia Task Force, where we have worked together to strengthen the economic, diplomatic, and security ties between our two nations.

Earlier this month, Senator BLUNT, who serves as the ranking member on the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, was instrumental in helping pass S. 5229, a bill I introduced directing the Joint Committee on the Library to remove the bust of Roger Taney from the Old Supreme Court Chamber and to obtain a bust of Thurgood Marshall. Taney was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who wrote the majority opinion in the infamous Dred Scott case in 1857. Marshall was the first Black Supreme Court Justice.

Senator BLUNT is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, and he has skillfully looked after his State’s interests. But he has had a much broader vision, too, particularly when it comes to the National Institutes of Health—NIH—located not in Missouri, but in my home State of Maryland. As the former chair and now the ranking member on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and

Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor/HHS), Senator BLUNT secured seven consecutive funding increases for NIH totaling \$15.4 billion.

Thanks in large part to Senator BLUNT’s leadership, Alzheimer’s disease research funding has more than quintupled, increasing from \$631 million to nearly \$3.5 billion. In September, NIH dedicated the ROY BLUNT Center for Alzheimer’s and Related Dementias Research in Bethesda, MD.

Thanks in large part to Senator BLUNT’s leadership, the National Cancer Institute has received an increase of nearly \$2 billion, or 40 percent, over the past 7 years.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which President Biden signed into law in June, included more than \$8.5 billion to expand the successful Excellence in Mental Health Program, which created Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics—CCBHCs—to every State that chooses to participate. Nine states, including Missouri and Michigan, are currently participating in the CCBHC program; 10 additional States may opt into the program every 2 years.

Senator BLUNT worked with Senator STABENOW to pass the Excellence in Mental Health Act in 2014. The law, which marked the most significant expansion of community mental health and addiction services in decades, created CCBHCs that provide a wide range of services, including 24/7/365 crisis services, immediate screenings, risk assessments, and diagnoses. Missouri was one of the first eight States selected to participate in the Excellence pilot program, and has done so since 2017.

Start-up grants have expanded the number of clinics to more than 300 communities across 40 States, plus Washington, DC, and that number continues to grow. Annual funding for CCBHC expansion grants started at \$100 million in fiscal year 2018 and is now \$315 million. The total funding for fiscal years 2018 through 2022 exceeds \$1 billion. In 2020, Congress also provided an additional \$850 million through emergency COVID funding. These clinics serve about 1.5 million people across the country.

These are just a few of Senator BLUNT’s many accomplishments on behalf of his beloved Missourians, all Americans, and people around the world. Senator BLUNT is always interested in trying to find consensus, and he usually succeeds. Wherever there are bipartisan “gangs,” as we call them, working on thorny issues from infrastructure to marriage equality to Electoral Count Act reform, you will find Senator BLUNT. His service provides a model all Senators should strive to emulate.

I will miss collaborating with Senator BLUNT but am grateful that our congressional careers have overlapped for the past 26 years. We all owe a debt of gratitude to his lovely wife Abigail—