

(5) The staff shall pay due regard to the constitutional separation of powers between the Senate and the executive branch. It therefore has a responsibility to help the committee bring to bear an independent, objective judgment of proposals by the executive branch and when appropriate to originate sound proposals of its own. At the same time, the staff shall avoid impinging upon the day-to-day conduct of foreign affairs.

(6) In those instances when committee action requires the expression of minority views, the staff shall assist the minority as fully as the majority to the end that all points of view may be fully considered by members of the committee and of the Senate. The staff shall bear in mind that under our constitutional system it is the responsibility of the elected members of the Senate to determine legislative issues in the light of as full and fair a presentation of the facts as the staff may be able to obtain.

(b) *Personal Representatives of the Member (PRM).*—Each Senator on the committee shall be authorized to designate one personal staff member as the member's personal representative of the member and designee to the committee (PRM) that shall be deemed to have the same rights, duties, and responsibilities as members of the staff of the Committee on Foreign Relations where specifically provided for in these rules.

(c) *Restrictions.*—

(1) The staff shall regard its relationship to the committee as a privileged one, in the nature of the relationship of a lawyer to a client. In order to protect this relationship and the mutual confidence which must prevail if the committee-staff relationship is to be a satisfactory and fruitful one, the following criteria shall apply, unless staff has consulted with and obtained, as appropriate, the approval of the Senate Ethics Committee and advance permission from the staff director (or the minority staff director in the case of minority staff):

(A) members of the staff shall not be identified with any special interest group in the field of foreign relations or allow their names to be used by any such group; and

(B) members of the staff shall not accept public speaking engagements or write for publication in the field of foreign relations.

(2) The staff shall not discuss their private conversations with members of the committee without specific advance permission from the Senator or Senators concerned.

(3) The staff shall not discuss with anyone the proceedings of the committee in closed session or reveal information conveyed or discussed in such a session unless that person would have been permitted to attend the session itself or is a member or staff of a relevant committee or executive branch agency and possesses an appropriate security clearance, or unless such communication is specifically authorized by the staff director or minority staff director. Unauthorized disclosure of information from a closed session or of classified information shall be cause for immediate dismissal and may, in certain cases, be grounds for criminal prosecution.

RULE 15—STATUS AND AMENDMENT OF RULES

(a) *Status.*—In addition to the foregoing, the Committee on Foreign Relations is governed by the Standing Rules of the Senate, which shall take precedence in the event of a clear inconsistency. In addition, the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the committee with respect to certain matters, as well as the timing and procedure for their consideration in committee, may be governed by statute.

(b) *Amendment.*—These rules may be modified, amended, or repealed by a majority of the committee, provided that a notice in writing (including by electronic mail) of the

proposed change has been given to each member at least 72 hours prior to the meeting at which action thereon is to be taken. However, rules of the committee which are based upon Senate rules may not be superseded by committee vote alone.

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, 108 years ago on April 24, 1915, Ottoman Turkey began the systematic killing and deportation of Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople. Between 1915 and 1923, an estimated 1-and-a-half million Armenians fell victim to one of history's most ruthless and notorious genocides. Most who survived eventually emigrated to different parts of the world, forming a widespread diaspora. The American people have a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian genocide and have provided relief and a new home to many of the Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians who survived this campaign of mass extermination. Today, Armenian Americans are a vital part of the cultural fabric of the United States.

As we commemorate this dark period, I would encourage my colleagues to remember that atrocities like the Armenian genocide are almost never spontaneous events. They typically follow a period of human rights violations, discrimination, and violence against specific groups who often share a racial, ethnic, religious, or social identity. Most recently, we have seen this in the Chinese Communist Party's inhumane treatment of ethnic minorities, including the persecution of Uyghurs, Tibetans, and Mongolians and dissenters in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and further abroad. Our foreign policy should recognize this, fight denialism of past and current crimes, and emphasize the preservation of human rights rather than relying on eleventh hour action that comes far too late for vulnerable populations.

On behalf of all Tennesseans, I offer this solemn recognition of the Armenian genocide and ask my colleagues to join me in pledging to fight the forces of evil still causing so much pain and suffering around the globe.

FAITH MONTH

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, Americans across the country, led by Concerned Women for America, the Nation's largest public policy organization for women, and other faith-based organizations continue to celebrate April as Faith Month. I commend this noble effort calling all people of faith to join in prayer, thanksgiving, and celebration of their faith.

The United States of America was born of the unanimous Declaration that we are "endowed by [our] Creator with certain unalienable Rights," based on "the Laws of Nature and of

Nature's God," "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world," and acknowledging our "reliance on the protection of divine Providence." We are a people of faith, which is why religious freedom is known as America's first freedom, as laid out in the Establishment and the Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The freedom of speech is guaranteed by the First Amendment and also supports America's unique focus on freedom of expression, including in matters of faith.

America's Judeo-Christian founding promotes religious diversity and tolerance. Our motto, "In God We Trust," further emphasizes the importance of faith in our Nation's founding. From our first President to the last, we have always acknowledged America's faith. President George Washington recognized "it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."

Preserving our religious freedom, which strengthens our country's appreciation of all peoples, regardless of faith, requires eternal diligence. Sadly, attacks on religious liberty and people of faith are growing, with some religious charities forced to betray the tenets of their faith in order to participate in certain government programs. We must actively reject all efforts to criminalize or cancel religious beliefs as somehow incompatible with our democracy.

Religious organizations in America have a rich history of charitable engagement by helping the sick, poor, and afflicted. Their presence in my State of Mississippi following devastating and fatal tornadoes in March has been a blessing to those trying to rebuild their lives. Their service demonstrates why these organizations should be celebrated, not maligned, for their contributions to improve life. According to the Pew Research Center, more than 75 percent of Americans practice some type of religious faith. This rich, diverse religious heritage is to our credit and should be encouraged.

This Faith Month, I join millions of Americans in honoring the right to practice our faith freely and openly, with public displays and celebrations, including prayer and expressions of thanksgiving. In this manner, we reaffirm our commitment to the religious liberty principles of our founding.

TRIBUTE TO ALAN KOHLER

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I rise today in recognition of the retirement of Alan Kohler.

Alan leaves the FBI as Assistant Director of the Counterintelligence Division, a challenging post he has held since 2020. Over his long and impressive career with the FBI, Alan has continuously worked on our most pressing national security issues. It is a career that has truly lived up to the FBI's

motto of “Fidelity, Bravery, and Integrity.”

As part of its history, the Senate Intelligence Committee has worked to ensure the intelligence community works seamlessly across its many Agencies and with our allies to protect Americans. That is a goal Alan Kohler committed his life’s work to, whether he was serving overseas as legal attache in the United Kingdom to coordinate efforts with our closest ally or developing new means of integrating and cooperating across Agencies like the Counterintelligence Task Force he established during his time as Assistant Director, his accomplishments have inspired junior agents and personnel to break through Agency stovepipes in defense of our Nation.

Alan’s faithful service to the Bureau spanned three decades, through some of our Nation’s darkest days. He joined the FBI in 1996 and was assigned to work counterintelligence cases in the Washington field office, right in the wake of and in the midst of some of the most damaging espionage cases the U.S. has faced. In the days after the attacks on September 11, Alan bravely served on the evidence recovery team at the Pentagon in Arlington, VA.

After transferring to the New York field office in 2006, Alan Kohler worked cases that led to the arrest of 10 Russian illegals in 2010, earning the Attorney General Award for Exceptional Service and changing the way Americans understood the intelligence activities of our adversaries. He was also fortunate enough to be assigned as assistant special agent in charge of the Norfolk field office where he was responsible for all of the FBI’s counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and crisis management programs for that community.

In 2017, after Russia’s unprecedented interference in our elections, Alan established the FBI’s Foreign Influence Task Force, an entity we on the Senate Intelligence Committee continue to rely on to collect on and report threats to the very foundation of our democracy.

As chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I have relied on Alan’s integrity to provide the committee with honest and timely information, even when it was not easy for him to do. He consistently demonstrated professionalism in all our engagements and modeled a constructive relationship between the executive and legislative branches. It was a professionalism born of his commitment to safeguard our Nation. I am certain Alan will find ways to continue to serve as he enjoys his very well-earned retirement. I would also like to recognize his family who has supported him throughout his tremendous career.

RECOGNIZING THE CASPER AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate 120 years of con-

tinued community service by the Casper Area Chamber of Commerce of Wyoming.

For 120 years, our city has grown and flourished, due in many ways to the efforts of the Casper Area Chamber. The chamber aims to provide organizational structure to build a better Natrona County and to improve opportunities for all businesses in the community. The chamber was founded in 1903 as the Casper Industrial Association by Alfred James Mokler, then publisher of the Natrona County Tribune. A small number of businesses banded together to create the association. Some of their early goals were to pave the streets, install a water and sewer system, and to construct public parks, a courthouse, a city hall, a Federal building, and a railway. All of these goals were realized. Today, the chamber has over 600 members and continues to grow each year. The mission now is the same as it was 120 years ago, to actively create business opportunities by “connecting, informing, leveraging, and collaborating with their members.”

After the first World War, the Casper Industrial Association reorganized and became the Casper Area Chamber of Commerce. At that time, just over 11,000 people were living in Casper and 14,000 in Natrona County. During the 1930s, the chamber was a key player in the construction of a north-to-south rail line from Montana to Colorado by the Wyoming-Montana Railroad Company. The chamber also ensured that freight rates were competitive. This allowed local industry to bring in new services and hire competitively. During the 1960s, the chamber worked to make Casper the convention center of Wyoming. They held over 100 conventions, attracting over 20,000 visitors.

Progress continued into the 1980s when the chamber designed the Leadership Casper program, organized legislative luncheons, and created professional networking opportunities. During the 2000s, the chamber focused on developing the west side of Casper. The first “Shop Local” campaign was established. In 2020, the chamber was instrumental in connecting businesses with the Federal funding they needed to stay open through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Casper Area Chamber of Commerce is part of a long and rich local history. It was instrumental in moving Natrona County forward. Their positive influence over the past 120 years can be seen today in our thriving community.

The Casper Area Chamber of Commerce is the foundation on which the economy of Casper is built. They work hard to maintain a prosperous business environment. This ensures the longevity of tourism, industry, and small businesses.

In Wyoming, we value community, leadership, and service. The Casper Area Chamber of Commerce puts these values into practice. As board chair,

Sabrina Kemper said, “Without commerce, our community cannot thrive.”

Today, the Chamber Staff and Board of Directors include:

Staff
Tina Hoebelheinrich, Executive Director
Sabrina Kemper, Board Chairman
Katie Schultz, Past-Chairman
Phillip Rael, Board Member
Gena Jensen, Chairman-Elect
Amanda Disney, Treasurer
Jereca Lutz, VP of Development
Kim Coleman, VP of Marketing and Communication
Darcie Holscher, VP of Special Events
Officers
Ken White
Nikki Hawley
Robert Ratliff
Tom McCarthy
Bryant Hall
Michael Morrissey
Paul Nash
Sonya Gruner

It is an honor for me to rise in recognition of this significant milestone for the Casper Area Chamber of Commerce of Wyoming. The impact and opportunities the chamber has created for Casper businesses is incredible. Bobbi joins me in extending our congratulations to the Casper Area Chamber of Commerce for 120 years of community service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING PASQUALE “PAT” BATTINELLI, JR.

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to Pasquale “Pat” Battinelli, Jr., a lifelong Connecticut resident, distinguished veteran, and friend to many. Sadly, Mr. Battinelli passed away on April 6, 2023, at the age of 90. He will be remembered for his steadfast dedication to his country and community.

Pat was born in Darien before moving to Stamford as a young boy. There, he met the love of his life, Gloria Fabrizio, at the age of 13. After graduating from Stamford High School, Pat enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Stationed in the Philippines during the Korean war, Pat served honorably for 4 years. In 1954, after completing his service, he returned to Stamford where he married Gloria. The couple were married for 68 years and raised four children.

In addition to his military service, Pat had a distinguished record of giving back to Stamford and our State. As chief of the Glenbrook Fire Department and commander of the Lock City Detachment of the Marine Corps League, as well as an active member of the Knights of Columbus, Pat has demonstrated a lifelong dedication to community service. I personally saw Pat at work in all these positions, but also very importantly as leader of Stamford’s Patriotic and Special Events Commission for over 30 years. In this role, he was in charge of every parade Stamford held during his tenure, a testament to Pat’s civic mindedness and patriotism.