

The story of this Kentucky railroad empire begins in 1973 with my good friend and Nicholasville native, Mr. Rick Corman. It was just after high school when Rick founded his first business venture, R.J. Corman Railroad Construction, and, like its founder, the company hailed from humble beginnings.

At 18 years old, Rick started out making track repairs for major railroads equipped with nothing more than a backhoe and a red dump truck. Thanks to his tireless work ethic and shrewd instincts, Rick grew his humble operation into what is now the R.J. Corman Railroad Group, a diversified portfolio of railroad companies. Rick would grow his business across 23 States, employ over 1,600 workers, and expand into a host of verticals that ranged from short-line railroad operations to emergency and natural disaster response.

Amid some of our country's most horrific floods, blizzards, and hurricanes, Rick's team was on the ground to assist in recovery and cleanup efforts. When Hurricane Katrina struck the central Gulf and devastated railroad infrastructure across the South, Rick mobilized his emergency response crew to repair railways in record time.

In his personal life, Rick and his company were avid donors to St. Joseph Hospital in Jessamine County, so much so that the hospital recognized Rick as its largest philanthropic donor. The hospital established the R.J. Corman Ambulatory Care Center in 2008, which continues to serve the community of Nicholasville to this day.

Tragically, the company lost its seemingly unstoppable founder 10 years ago to a hard-fought battle with multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. Rick was just 58. Despite his cancer diagnosis, Rick would continue to enjoy life, travel the world, and even run the Boston Marathon. To this day, his infectious laugh, warm demeanor, and irresistible spirit for life are deeply missed by his family and loved ones. In honor of Rick, the company and its employees contribute to the Richard J. Corman Multiple Myeloma Fund each year, which helps support research work at Harvard's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Despite losing its torchbearer, the company and Rick's legacy prevailed. R.J. Corman continues to operate as one of the leading railroad service providers in the U.S., serving all seven major railroads in North America. Most recently, the company added a 19th railroad to its wide-spanning portfolio. R.J. Corman's iconic red train cars are an unmistakable fixture of central Kentucky, and the company's impact on our Commonwealth continues to extend beyond its railway business.

The company remains a worthy custodian of Rick's name and his legacy of generosity, compassion, and hard work. I am proud to honor this classic American success story and celebrate its

many contributions to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in recognizing R.J. Corman Railroad Group for 50 outstanding years.

NATIONAL FENTANYL AWARENESS DAY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, May 9, is National Fentanyl Awareness Day. In the last 12 months, over 108,000 Americans have died from drug overdoses, mainly from fentanyl and its analogues. Fentanyl overdoses are the number one cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45, so I come to the floor to do two things.

First, I am here to introduce a bipartisan resolution supporting the goals of National Fentanyl Awareness Day. The resolution aims to increase awareness of the impact of fake or counterfeit fentanyl pills on families and young people. And it applauds the work of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies that combat the proliferation of counterfeit pills.

And second, I am here to reintroduce my bipartisan legislation, the Stop Pills That Kill Act. This bill creates new penalties for counterfeit pill production. There is a surge throughout the United States of counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl and fentanyl analogues. People unknowingly take these counterfeit pills. Many of them die. Drug traffickers have been marketing and selling these fake pills using social media. The Stop Pills That Kill Act will ramp up criminal penalties to deter this illegal activity and save lives.

Later this week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will mark up another bill I cosponsor, the Cooper Davis Act. This bipartisan bill requires social media companies, the same places where these fake pills are being sold, to report information to Federal Agencies relating to illicit online fentanyl on their platforms. The reporting requirements will help law enforcement root out and dismantle international crime networks and save lives. I look forward to reporting the bill out of committee and quickly getting it to the President's desk.

Whether it is at my roundtables in Iowa or during my 99-county meetings, parents continue to come up to me and tell me about the children they have lost to fentanyl poisoning. It is heart-breaking to see the pain on their face and hear it in their voice, as they share what the fentanyl crisis has done to their family.

I hope we see action to move these bills and permanently schedule fentanyl related substances. I am as committed as ever to cracking down on fentanyl and its analogues, and I hope my colleagues will join me soon.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE RICARDO H. HINOJOSA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I honor today Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa for his lifelong commitment to the rule of law, particularly his 40 years of extraordinary service in our Federal judiciary. Currently, Judge Hinojosa is the longest serving Federal judge remaining in active service.

Born in Rio Grande City, TX, to Miguel and Josefina Hinojosa, Judge Hinojosa learned the value of hard work early on, graduating valedictorian from Rio Grande City High School. Judge Hinojosa then went to the University of Texas, where he graduated with honors in 1972. Judge Hinojosa continued his studies at Harvard Law School. After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1975, Judge Hinojosa clerked for a year on the Texas Supreme Court. Judge Hinojosa then entered private practice in McAllen at the law firm Ewers & Toothaker. Rising to the level of partner in 1979, Judge Hinojosa specialized in business litigation and employment law. In 1983, President Reagan nominated Judge Hinojosa to be a U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of Texas. On May 5, 1983, he received his formal commission.

During Judge Hinojosa's 40 years on the bench, he has served with distinction, fairness, and impartiality. His peers, colleagues, and the Texas legal community have recognized his immense impact by awarding him the University of Texas Distinguished Alumnus Award, the Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award, and the Border Texan of the Year.

As a district court judge, Judge Hinojosa has tirelessly worked to improve the rule of law. Indeed, he has taken on leadership roles in the Fifth Circuit Judicial Counsel, the Judicial Conference of the United States, and on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. In these various positions, he has helped craft solutions and made recommendations to improve sentencing, the operations of the courts, and access to justice.

Judge Hinojosa's distinguished service extends beyond the courtroom. Judge Hinojosa served on the board of directors of the John G. and Marie Stella Kennedy Memorial foundation, the board of trustees of the University of the Incarnate Word, the board of trustees of the University of Texas Law School Foundation, and the board of directors of the Ex Students Association of the University of Texas.

It is evident that Judge Hinojosa has dedicated his life and career to serving others and improving communities in Texas and beyond. For this work and the work that he has still yet to accomplish, I would like to recognize him. Thank you, Judge Hinojosa.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL D. QUICKEL

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I pay tribute to Mike Quickel, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee's policy director, who is leaving Congress after more than 25 years of devoted service.

One of the things that eases our jobs in the Senate is knowing we have solid people working steadily and earnestly beside us on behalf of the great people we represent. Idaho and our country have had that for decades with Mike Quickel. Since 2000, when he came to work in my office, after working more than a year as staff assistant for the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, he has consistently supported Idahoans and the important work we do here in the Senate on behalf of the American people.

After little more than a year of serving as a legislative correspondent, Mike was quickly promoted to serve as my tax and budget adviser, and he has generally served in this capacity through multiple positions since. As senior policy adviser, he staffed my positions on the Senate Finance and Budget Committees. His responsibilities included developing well-defined strategies for various tax legislative efforts. He also helped lead the bipartisan Senate Finance Committee Task Force on Savings and Investment. The task force crafted retirement savings proposals that were later enacted into law as part of the SECURE Act in 2019. Every American worker should have the opportunity to save for a secure retirement, and Mike's work on this legislation has helped make it easier for Americans to do so.

His steadiness, dependability, and strong grasp of policy and its practical effects also saw him tasked with critical, but under the radar, responsibilities like editing constituent response letters. I always have known I can count on him for the small and big tasks at hand. He proved this when he helped develop fiscal reform and debt reduction proposals when I served on the bipartisan Simpson/Bowles Commission in 2010. I cannot mention that commission without also noting that our country would now be on better fiscal footing if Congress had fully enacted the fiscal reforms Mike worked on more than a decade ago.

But, back on point, when I began leading the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs as ranking member and chairman, Mike came with me and served as policy director for the committee. During this time, he worked tirelessly on drafting and negotiating the historic enactment of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, TCJA. This law, which is probably the achievement he is most proud of during his time in the Senate, lowered tax rates for all Americans, ensured American job-creators could better compete and bring jobs back to our country and led to the strongest economy in many of our lifetimes prior to the pandemic.

He also successfully led bipartisan efforts to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank in 2019, as well as Senate confirmation of its chairman and board members. The Export-Import Bank had operated without congressional authorization and a Senate-confirmed chairman for several years, and Mike was instrumental in fixing this lapse. Additionally, he supported the successful bipartisan enactment in 2018 of the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act. This law has enabled financial institutions to better serve their customers and communities, while maintaining safety and soundness and important consumer protections.

When I became ranking member of Senate Finance in 2021, I once again asked Mike to come with me and serve as policy director for the committee. Throughout this time, he has continued to dependably and professionally contribute to consequential legislation and policy initiatives, including his work to strengthen retirement security through the enactment of the SECURE 2.0 law in December 2022. This law expanded opportunities for Americans to increase their retirement savings and improve workers' long-term financial well-being. He has also been instrumental in successfully protecting the TCJA from attempts to undo its tax reform benefits.

In addition to his policy expertise and keen knowledge of the Senate, Mike has helped and supported others. He has mentored countless young staffers and even set up annual Thanksgiving dinners for staff, many of whom were far away from home during the holidays. He is known as being loyal to everyone he has worked with over the years.

Mike has been a steady, unassuming, and strong influence in the Senate. He is quiet but thorough. When I think of Mike, I think of God's instruction in the Bible verse James 1:19-20. He is truly quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. He listens carefully before framing the task or problem to fix that is weighed against his significant experience, knowledge, and know-how. He listens and reasons first and then acts prudently and never impulsively. This has been invaluable, as he has helped shape tax, retirement and economic policy that has had far-reaching benefits for our country. It will take a great deal of time to get used to not having Mike as a central part of my staff, but I wish him all the best. He has more than earned more time with his lovely family—wife Meg and son Davey—that I am hopeful his departure from Washington, DC, will afford him.

Thank you, Mike, for your 25 years of dedicated, sound, and measured service to our country.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR STEVEN VEAZEY

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and congratulate CSM Steven Veazey on his upcoming retirement from the Arkansas Army National Guard after 44 years of distinguished military service to our great Nation.

CSM Veazey had an exceptional career in the Arkansas National Guard. For the past 12 years, he has served as the senior enlisted adviser to the adjutant general and Arkansas Governor on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale and proper utilization and progress of the Arkansas enlisted force.

After enlisting in the Army in 1979, CSM Veazey would go on to serve in various duties and leadership roles as an infantryman. He deployed in support of the U.S. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the senior enlisted leader of the Joint Forces of the Arkansas National Guard, his integrity, character and transparent leadership built an enduring trust with the 8,000 enlisted members under his command. His passion for building a trained, ready, and resilient force will have lasting positive impacts on the Arkansas National Guard, the servicemembers, and their families.

As the ranking member of the appropriations subcommittee responsible for ensuring our Armed Forces and their families have the infrastructure and facilities to support their needs, I met with CSM Veazey as he encouraged congressional support to strengthen National Guard priorities and military readiness. Arkansas can be proud of his advocacy and leadership that integrally contributed to the U.S. ability to maintain our military superiority.

On behalf of the U.S. Senate and a grateful nation, I extend my deepest appreciation to CSM Veazey and his family for their many years of exemplary military service and sacrifice. I wish him nothing but the very best in the future.●

TRIBUTE TO AIRMAN EARL SMITH

● Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, we will never fully understand—or know—the sacrifices our servicemembers make to keep us safe, both at home and abroad, like Airman First Class Earl Smith of Lincoln, AL. His story of heroism went untold for more than 50 years because of security reasons. His bravery and quick action prevented what could have been the worst nuclear disaster in history.

Raised on a farm in Hatton, AL, Airman Smith and a friend decided on a whim to enlist in the U.S. Air Force after visiting a recruiting office in their local community. Always up for an adventure, Airman Smith decided to enroll in bomb disposal school after enlisting. He recalls his instructor's