

his own chauffeur service, but he returned to the Foreign Relations Committee a decade later as hearing coordinator—a job he held until his nineties.

Through it all, Bertie exhibited the decency and courtesy that led him to befriend all those who knew him.

I want to honor Bertie Bowman for his lifelong dedication and service to this institution and to our democracy and to thank him for setting the example of civility to which we all should aspire.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM B. SHEAR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I request unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from Iowa.

As chair of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I rise to celebrate the venerable career of Director William Shear of the U.S. Government Accountability Office—GAO—and congratulate him on his retirement.

Mr. Shear is a Director at the U.S. Government Accountability Office. As a leader on the Financial Markets and Community Investment team, his portfolio addresses small business issues, community and economic development, and Native American housing issues. In addition to these important issues, Mr. Shear's portfolio includes oversight of many Small Business Administration—SBA—programs that address contracting, disaster assistance, access to capital, and entrepreneurial counseling.

Mr. Shear's career at the GAO spans over two decades. In this time, he has had profound impact on the government's small business programs and served thousands of citizens who use these important programs every day. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Shear testified before the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to provide his essential perspective on the SBA's COVID relief programs. His testimony emphasized the importance of conducting effective oversight and of ensuring that relief was delivered to the people who needed it most.

At the height of the pandemic, my colleagues and I on the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship worked tirelessly on behalf of America's small businesses and worked to ensure that the most vulnerable small businesses received the help they needed. Mr. Shear's commitment to upholding the integrity of the SBA's relief programs was foundational to our work. His testimony supported the committee's mission to serve America's most vulnerable businesses during an unprecedented time of uncertainty and chaos, and we are grateful to him for his invaluable contributions.

Mr. Shear also contributed to the committee's efforts to improve the SBA's contracting programs. His testimony provided the committee with valuable insight into the SBA's efforts

to provide better contracting opportunities for small businesses, especially women-owned and veteran-owned firms, and his suggestions on how to improve these programs were indispensable to us.

Advocating for small business growth, especially among women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses, is critically important. About 99 percent of the businesses in my home State of New Hampshire are small, and these businesses employ about half of Granite Staters. With GAO, Mr. Shear has been a tireless advocate for these same small businesses. He has worked hard with the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the SBA to ensure that the programs established to help America's small businesses continue to do so and continue to improve.

As chair of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am honored to thank Mr. Shear for his contributions to GAO, to the committee's work, and to small businesses across the country. We will miss his hard work and his advocacy. I offer him warm congratulations on his retirement and wish him well in his future endeavors.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have had the firsthand opportunity to see the impact that small businesses have on local communities and the work of dedicated public servants to ensure that they remain the backbone of the economy. Today, I would like to recognize Mr. William Shear, a public servant who has dedicated over 20 years to America's small businesses and wish him a happy retirement.

Mr. Shear serves as the Director of Financial Markets and Community Investment at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO. In this role, he has distinguished himself as an expert on the Small Business Administration's disaster assistance lending, government contracting, and small business credit programs. In his time at GAO, he served as Acting Director for Physical Infrastructure and was Assistant Director of Financial Markets and Community Investment. Mr. Shear is a graduate of the University of Chicago with both a master's degree in public policy and a Ph.D. in economics. In addition to his time at GAO, he is a former lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, where he taught city and regional planning.

Mr. Shear is no stranger to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. As the Director of Financial Markets and Community Investment, he has testified numerous times before the committee as a champion of saving the American taxpayer their hard-earned dollars. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Deepwater Horizon disaster, and Hurricane Sandy, Mr. Shear was there to provide answers with his insight and knowl-

edge on disaster assistance. His testimonies provided the committee with meaningful solutions that assisted the small businesses in our home States and communities.

I want to congratulate Mr. Shear on his outstanding career at GAO. We appreciate his dedication to America's small businesses and the expertise he provided to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. I would like to associate myself with the comments of the chair.

TRIBUTE TO BOB CABANA

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, this week, NASA Associate Administrator, former astronaut, and my friend Colonel Robert Cabana announced his retirement, effective December 31, after more than 38 years of public service to NASA. In his current capacity as Associate Administrator, Colonel Cabana served as the Agency's highest ranking civil servant, third highest ranking NASA official, and the senior adviser to NASA Administrator Bill Nelson and Deputy Administrator Pam Melroy. Colonel Cabana's legacy, among many things, includes a significant contribution to the Nation's human spaceflight program and decades of energetic leadership at the Agency. On a personal level, he played an important leadership role within the astronaut corps, including as chief of NASA's Astronaut Office when I was as an astronaut and during my selection and early years at NASA. I am honored to congratulate Bob on his retirement and thank him for his many years of service.

Born in Minneapolis, Bob graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, became a naval aviator, and graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in 1981. During his military career, he logged over 7,000 hours in more than 50 different kinds of aircraft. He retired as a colonel from the U.S. Marine Corps in September 2000.

Bob was selected as an astronaut candidate in 1985 and went on to log 38 days in space during four shuttle missions. He piloted the Space Shuttle Discovery on missions STS-41 in 1990 and STS-53 in 1992. During STS-53, the crew conducted microgravity research experiments that helped pave the way for future operations aboard the International Space Station. He commanded Columbia's STS-65 mission in 1994, and in 1998, his final flight, he commanded Space Shuttle *Endeavour* on STS-88, which was the first International Space Station assembly mission.

The International Space Station has been orbiting Earth about every 90 minutes and conducting groundbreaking science since November 2000 thanks to the contributions by Bob during STS-88. While at the Johnson Space Center, he served as the lead astronaut in the Shuttle Avionics Integration Laboratory, Mission Control Spacecraft Communicator—CAPCOM—and as the director of Flight Crew Operations Directorate.

He went on to serve as the Deputy Director of the Johnson Space Center, the Center Director of NASA's Stennis Space Center, and then the Center Director at the Kennedy Space Center in 2007, where he led its transition from retirement of the space shuttle to a multi-user spaceport once again launching NASA astronauts to low Earth orbit and, for the first time, doing so with commercial partners. He served for more than a decade at the Kennedy Space Center until Senator Nelson called him up to headquarters in 2021.

And as Associate Administrator of the Agency, Bob has led NASA's 10 Center Directors, as well as the Mission Directorate Associate Administrators at NASA Headquarters in Washington. He has been the Agency's chief operating officer for more than 18,000 employees and oversaw an annual budget of more than \$25 billion.

Bob's many achievements have been recognized with induction into the Astronaut Hall of Fame and being named an associate fellow in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and a fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. He has received numerous personal awards and decorations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Presidential Distinguished Rank Award. He also is a recipient of the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement's National Space Trophy.

Thank you and congratulations to Bob for your many years of service, your dedicated leadership at NASA, your contribution to our Nation's spaceflight program, and your inspiration to us all.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLI A. KILEY

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great American and a U.S. Air Force civil servant, Ms. Charli Kiley.

Charli distinguished herself through her outstanding service as the office manager and scheduler for the U.S. Air Force's Senate Legislative Liaison office. For the last 13 years, Charli delivered exceptional service through her professionalism, attention to detail, and continued commitment to serving this Nation as a civil servant. Total service included, Charli honorably served a combined 38 years in the U.S. Air Force and civil service.

Throughout her career, Charli demonstrated exceptional work ethic. As a bipartisan volunteer, Charli was responsible for escorting guests for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to two Presidential inaugurations. In 2022, Charli directly supported a bicameral congressional delegation in support of the Reagan National Defense Forum, as well as the unveiling of the Department of Defense's newest bomber aircraft, the B-21 Raider.

As the manager and scheduler for the Air Force Senate Legislative Liaison office from April 2010 to June 2023,

Charli performed her duties well and without reservation supporting the 111th Congress through the 118th Congress. Her subject matter expertise, professional relationships, and in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of Capitol Hill directly strengthened and improved our national security. Charli was singularly responsible for scheduling thousands of engagements between Congress and the Department of the Air Force. These engagements helped U.S. Senators and staffers understand defense equities and their impact on national security. Due to her direct input and stewardship, Members of Congress were able to make informed decisions and ensured the Department of the Air Force was properly resourced and funded. Additionally, Charli's efforts helped establish the U.S. Space Force, she assisted with the confirmation of eight Air Force Secretaries, three Air Force Chiefs of Staff, two Chiefs of Space Operations, and gained the Department of the Air Force support for multiple National Defense Strategies. Last, Charli helped train nine incoming Senate Legislative Liaison division chiefs, nine deputy division chiefs, and dozens of action officers, ensuring seamless transitions, office continuity, and efficient performance.

After serving in this crucial role for the past 13 years and becoming a fixture on Capitol Hill, Ms. Charli Kiley will be retiring and moving to the great State of Colorado. Charli has given her all in service to our Nation. I am thankful for her service, her work with my office, and her work with the Senate on issues of vital importance to this great Nation. I salute this American patriot whose selfless service has kept our country safe and strong.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Center for Excellence in Education, CEE.

When Admiral Rickover and Joan DiGennaro founded CEE in 1983, they set out on an ambitious mission to nurture high school and university scholars towards esteemed careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—STEM. Since its founding, CEE's renowned Research Science Institute has collaborated with brilliant scholars from all 50 U.S. States and an impressive 61 countries. Further showcasing CEE's impact, the USA Biolympiad competition has had over 10,000 students participate, with the U.S. team achieving many gold medals. Additionally, the Teacher Enrichment Program and STEM Lyceums provide transformative learning opportunities for teachers, especially those in underserved and rural areas.

As an honorary trustee of CEE, I am consistently impressed with the organization's unwavering commitment to

advancing STEM education. Through my lens as a legislator, I recognize the critical importance of STEM education as we navigate the challenges posed by global competitors in domains spanning advanced mathematics, artificial intelligence, and biosecurity. STEM will undeniably shape the future economy, and I wholeheartedly commend CEE's efforts to inspire and equip our youth with the necessary skills for a flourishing future.

It is my honor to recognize and congratulate the Center for Excellence in Education on its 40th anniversary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JIM DEREMEIK

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of a dear friend Jim Deremeik who dedicated his career to supporting low-vision rehabilitation care and education.

Jim and I first met at the New York Lighthouse Guild. I was finishing my optometry studies and doing an externship with the lighthouse program, and Jim was working at the Arkansas School for the Blind. Our work at the New York Lighthouse Guild involved learning how to better enable people who are blind, but still had partial vision, to use this remaining vision through magnifiers and other devices so they could better navigate a sighted world. Through Jim's persistence, I began volunteering in Little Rock at the Arkansas School for the Blind and developing a low-vision program. Working together and with the great team at the school, we were able to make a big difference in the lives of many students. Our working relationship turned into a deep friendship.

My old football coach at the University of Arkansas Frank Broyles always used to say there are two kinds of people: givers and takers. I soon learned that Jim was the definition of a giver. Over the years, Jim has received many awards and accolades, but the thing he will be most remembered for is his servant leadership towards his students and clients, along with the example that he has set for his friends and co-workers.

I know Jim is retiring, but I can't imagine him not being involved in some way through various organizations and entities to continue helping others. My only regret is that life has taken us down separate paths, and we have not gotten to spend nearly as much time with each other as I would like. I wish Jim and Peggy, his wonderful wife, the best. The blind community is much better off as a result of the dedication and care of Jim Deremeik.●

TRIBUTE TO ALEX SANCHEZ

● Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I stand to recognize and congratulate Alex Sanchez, president and CEO of the