

Towell, Ph.D., for his more than 17 years of service to Congress and the American people as a specialist in U.S. Defense Policy and Budget at the Congressional Research Service, CRS. Dr. Towell is widely recognized as a foremost defense policy expert. Senators, Members of Congress, and staff have all relied on his knowledge, expertise, and guidance at pivotal points in the development of the annual defense authorization and appropriations bills. Having served with CRS since 2006, Dr. Towell will retire at the end of this year.

Throughout his tenure at CRS, Dr. Towell has advised congressional leaders, Department of Defense civilian and military officials, and foreign dignitaries on a range of defense policy and budgetary matters. A political scientist by training, he has exhibited a profound respect for the institution of Congress and an encyclopedic knowledge of the events and political personalities that have shaped defense issues. In addition to coordinating and authoring reports on annual defense authorization and appropriations legislation, Dr. Towell has written insightfully about key strategic guidance documents such as the Quadrennial Defense Review and the National Defense Strategy. He has also provided analyses of the debates over how to best organize the Federal Government to address national security challenges, and he has closely monitored funding for post-9/11 military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Dr. Towell's vast knowledge of the history of congressional operations has been an important source of institutional memory, particularly for newer Members and staff seeking to understand the lessons that can be drawn from past debates. A gifted public speaker known for his humor, quick wit, and enthusiasm in discussing defense matters, Dr. Towell has often presented at CRS's new Member seminar, an orientation for new Members of Congress, in Williamsburg, VA. He has served as a CRS speaker or panelist for visiting delegations from the U.S. war colleges, the NATO Defense College, and foreign Parliaments sponsored by the House Democracy Partnership. Dr. Towell also has participated in a staff exchange with the European Parliamentary Research Service—EPRS—in Brussels. For many years, he helped to organize and present at CRS's annual defense budget seminar for congressional staff. Drawing on a deep professional network built over decades of experience in both journalism and policy, Dr. Towell has mentored colleagues in part by organizing internal discussions with various defense scholars and practitioners, from leading think tank experts to senior Defense Department civilian leaders.

Before joining CRS, Dr. Towell was a lecturer in political science at California State College, Bakersfield from 1972 to 1975, a defense reporter at Con-

gressional Quarterly from 1975 to 2003, and a fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments from 2003 to 2006. He received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Georgetown University in Washington, DC; a master's degree in political science from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL; and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL.

On behalf of the U.S. Senate and the American people, I express deep gratitude for the contributions of Dr. Towell during his nearly two decades at CRS. Along with his family, friends, and colleagues, I thank him and wish him and his wife K.T. all the best in retirement.

#### TRIBUTE TO HENRIK MECINSKI

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Henrik for his hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Henrik is a native of New Jersey. He attends George Washington University, where he studies international affairs as well as law and society. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Henrik for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.

#### TRIBUTE TO VIENNA SCOTT

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Vienna for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Vienna is a native of Connecticut. She recently graduated from Yale University with an undergraduate degree in religious studies and political science, as well as a masters in religion and literature. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Vienna for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

#### TRIBUTE TO EDEN SISKIND

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to

express my appreciation to Eden for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican Conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Eden is a native of New Jersey. She attends Cornell University, where she studies communications, as well as law and society. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Eden for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

#### TRIBUTE TO HANDEN TORSACK

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Handen for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Handen is a native of Utah. He is currently a senior at Utah Valley University, where he is studying political science. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Handen for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all the best on his journey.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DICKENS ON THE STRAND FESTIVAL

● Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, Texas is home to many unique festivals that celebrate the food, music, and culture that have shaped our State. This year marks the 50th anniversary of an event "Texas Monthly" once dubbed "one of the most beloved and bizarre holiday traditions in Texas"—Dickens on the Strand.

Each December, the Galveston Historical Foundation hosts the Dickens on the Strand Festival, which celebrates the life and work of renowned novelist Charles Dickens. Throughout its history, this holiday festival has played a critical role in revitalizing and restoring the Strand National Historic Landmark District. This year's festival is expected to welcome more than 50,000 guests to the island.

Though Charles Dickens never set foot in Galveston, his descendants have attended the festival every year since 1986, and this year will be no exception.

Eight descendants of Charles Dickens are expected to attend this year's festival and provide readings of Dickens' work.

The festival also honors our proud and historic ties between Texas and the United Kingdom. In 1846, the first British Consulate in the Lone Star State was established in Galveston, and it remained open until 1939. The Second British Consul-General to Texas, Arthur Lynn, is buried in Galveston's City Cemetery.

I am pleased that the British Consulate-General in Houston will be the presenting sponsor for this year's festival. Events will take place in multiple locations across the city, including the Salute to Sunset on the Official Tall Ship of Texas, the *Elissa*, which was built in the United Kingdom.

Galveston's holiday tradition has won 24 International Festival and Events Association Pinnacle Awards in its history. It has also brought much happiness and pride to the community and the visitors who come to take part in the celebration.

Congratulations to all involved in organizing the 50th Dickens on The Strand Festival, and I wish all of its guests, staff, and honorees a very successful weekend.●

#### RECOGNIZING CARVER PUMP

● Ms. ERNST. Madam President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Carver Pump of Muscatine, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1938, Carver Pump was founded by brothers Ralph and Roy J. Carver in Matherville, IL, as a specialty manufacturer of self-priming pumps that are designed to prevent air pockets from forming while pumping fluids. Shortly after its founding, Carver Pump began providing pumps to the U.S. and the Allied navies during World War II. In 1941, Roy restructured the company and relocated to its current home in Muscatine, IA. Since World War II, Carver Pump has remained committed to providing high-quality pumps to the U.S. Navy. Currently, every Navy ship-building program, which is responsible for the ship construction of the U.S. Navy fleet, relies on a centrifugal pump from Carver Pump. Due to their hard work, Carver Pump received certification for their high-quality management systems by the International Organization for Standardization. Their pumps are used in a variety of industries, including mining, agriculture, automotive, and maritime. Roy J. Carver passed away in 1981, leaving behind a legacy of hard work, philanthropy, and business excellence. Today, Carver Pump is run by Carver family member Andrew Carver.

Carver Pump is an exemplary family business. Multiple generations of the

Carver family have worked at the company and been recognized for their contributions to both the pump industry and philanthropic efforts in Iowa. In 2019, Roy and his wife Lucille were posthumously awarded the Muscatine Community College Legends award for their continued legacy in Iowa. The Roy J. Carver Trust was also posthumously established and has been involved with the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Augustana College. At the University of Iowa, the Carver-Hawkeye Arena and Roy J. and Lucille Carver College of Medicine are named after Roy J. and Lucille in honor of their continued support of the university's academic and athletic programs. In 2023, Carver Pump celebrated its 85th business anniversary.

Carver Pump's commitment to producing high-quality pumps in Muscatine and supplying critical products to help the U.S. military is clear. I want to congratulate Andrew Carver, the Carver family, and the entire team at Carver Pump for their continued dedication to providing high-quality pumps throughout the world. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRUCE SAITO

● Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate Bruce Saito, director of the California Conservation Corps—CCC—on a decades-long career spent protecting California's environment, building a climate workforce of the future, and introducing generations of Californians to the conservation movement.

Today, the CCC is the oldest and largest conservation corps in the country and stands as a hallmark of California's commitment to the environment. But in 1977, just 1 year into its nascent mission, a young Bruce Saito signed up to serve with the organization as a supervisor and instructor, initiating what would become nearly a half-century of service protecting the beautiful State he grew up in.

From the beginning, Bruce worked diligently, earning promotions to become the director of the Los Angeles Urban Center and conservationist supervisor at the CCC Camarillo Center. In 1986, he left the CCC to help found the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, where he would serve for three decades transforming the nonprofit into one of the largest in the country. Thanks to Bruce, over 100,000 trees have been planted in and around Los Angeles, and parks around the city have thrived.

In 2015, Bruce would return to his roots when Governor Jerry Brown appointed him to serve as director of the CCC, where he served until October 31, 2023. In his time working there, Bruce has helped countless young Californians, giving young people valuable skills that in turn launched many of their careers and ignited lifelong passions for conservation.

California is a leader in the fight against the climate crisis—not just in the United States, but around the world. But that ethos of environmentalism, the culture of care for the community, wasn't always inevitable. California remains the environmental envy of the Nation because of people like Bruce, who not only had the passion to protect our earth but the willingness to bring others along with him.

And it is because of people like Bruce that our children's generation has a chance to know the same beauty of the land around us that we grew up with.

All of California wishes Bruce well in his much-deserved retirement, and we thank him for his decades of service.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:49 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4480. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4668. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman to publish guidance documents for certain rules, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4670. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require reporting on additional information with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5427. An act to prohibit individuals convicted of defrauding the Government from receiving any assistance from the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4480. An act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to report on the veterans interagency task force, to require the Comptroller General of the United States to report on access to credit for small business concerns owned and controlled by covered individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 4668. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman to publish guidance documents for certain rules, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

H.R. 4670. An act to amend the Small Business Act to require reporting on additional information with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by women, qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes;