

“forever chemicals,” called PFAS, found in firefighting foam. Exposure to these chemicals has been linked to cancer and other serious health effects—and now, efforts to combat exposure at airports thankfully will have a dedicated funding stream.

Another crucial issue the bill addresses is the air traffic controller shortage. My office has heard from air traffic controllers in Illinois whose towers have long been understaffed. Air traffic controllers work 10-hour days up to 6 days per week, in one of the most stressful and exhausting jobs in America. Their work is critical to the safety of our national aviation system—and we owe it to them to provide relief and better working conditions. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am glad our fiscal year 2024 transportation appropriations bill increased FAA funding to hire 1,800 new controllers and improve training facilities.

This FAA reauthorization bill builds upon this by requiring the FAA to improve staffing standards and set maximum hiring targets. I advocated for a provision in the Senate FAA bill that would have established another FAA training academy. Unfortunately, this was not included. But the bill directs the FAA to develop a plan to expand its training capacity and submit it to the Commerce Committee. I hope we continue this discussion.

As commercial travel has returned to pre-pandemic levels, the aviation industry has sounded alarms that the demand for aviation professionals may soon exceed supply. That is why another priority of mine has been to expand funding for Aviation Workforce Development grants. The bill authorizes \$60 million annually to invest in three grant programs to recruit and prepare aviation professionals and pilots. In Illinois, the aviation industry is an economic engine, generating more than \$95 billion in economic activity across 500,000 jobs. We need to continue our investments in its future leaders.

My other priorities have been focused on consumer protections. In October, I wrote to Secretary Buttigieg and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Chopra about troubling reports that airlines are engaging in unfair, abusive, and deceptive practices related to their loyalty programs. I worry that airlines are making it harder to redeem rewards.

I supported a provision, secured by my colleague Senator MARKEY of Massachusetts, in the Senate FAA bill that would have required airline frequent flyer programs to provide at least 90 days' notice before reducing or devaluing rewards. This was not included in the final bill; however, Senator MARKEY and I are introducing an amendment that would restore this provision. The bill does include some other consumer protections, including the creation of create Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary position at the De-

partment of Transportation's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection.

I have also been focused on ensuring Illinois communities have adequate air service. I have heard from constituents in my hometown of Springfield that the current flights to and from Chicago offered by American Airlines do not reflect demand. The Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield is neither a hub airport nor an Essential Air Service community. This places it in a gray area for Federal resources to ensure air service.

I requested language that would have directed DOT, in coordination with the FAA, to study ways to improve existing Federal programs—and explore new ones—to help communities like this retain sufficient flight service and schedules that reflect demand. This was not included in the final bill, but I have introduced an amendment with Senator GRASSLEY to add this study to the bill.

I am also pleased to see the FAA bill would allow DOT to impose penalties for Essential Air Service providers that try to terminate or reduce service to these communities.

I will continue advocating for these priorities throughout the Senate process. And I urge my colleagues to swiftly pass the FAA reauthorization bill to prevent a lapse in resources for our aviation system, those who operate it, and all who fly.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this week, we celebrate Public Service Recognition Week. Each year since 1985, this special week has been observed in honor of our Nation's public servants. Today, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for the 20.2 million Federal, State, county, and local public servants in the United States of America.

Our country relies on the critical work of the everyday heroes in the public sector workforce, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for their steadfast service. From astronauts to astrophysicists, caseworkers to court clerks, detectives to doctors, service-members to superintendents, teachers to transit workers, America's public servants comprise one of our Nation's most critical and often maligned assets. Every American feels the impact of the crucial work public servants perform in all aspects of their lives. Thanks to first responders, service-members, social workers, and every public servant in between, over 330 million Americans can rest knowing their loved ones are protected, the rule of law is respected, and that the public sector is here to make their lives more effective.

The talented public servants who tirelessly work to improve our Nation and the lives of the people who comprise it are amongst the bravest and most honorable individuals on the globe.

On their first day of school, our children are entrusted to the teachers who provide them an educational foundation to guide them throughout their lives. When a novel disease impacts our communities, it is researchers who innovate and pursue medical solutions, as our doctors, nurses, and EMTs care for patients on the frontlines. It is our postal workers who deliver critical checks, medication, and information to our veterans and seniors who await the arrival of benefits they have earned.

America's public servants demonstrate their commitment to their communities in a diverse set of essential roles. What all members of the public sector workforce have in common, though, is their motivation to help our Nation progress and prosper.

The public sector workforce—particularly at the Federal level—have a sense of duty and a love of their community and country that compel them. So many public servants could earn higher salaries in private sector jobs, but their motivation is more than pecuniary gain.

At the heart of the U.S. Government are civil servants, individuals who are classified as nonpartisan career Federal employees. These public servants are not committed to a particular ideology or political figure in their official capacity. In recent years, however, these folks have faced threats to their civil service status at the hands of the very partisan influence they are supposed to be protected from.

Civil servants elect to work for the American people first, and they deserve the opportunity to carry out their service without fear of being relieved of duties or retaliation based on non-allegiance to a political party. That is why I commend the Biden administration and the Office of Personnel Management for issuing the final rule in opposition to the previous administration's Schedule F classification.

Our civil servants honorably serve our Nation without political fear or favor. OPM's reiteration of support for nonpartisan Federal employee protections is a crucial victory, not only for the 2.2 million individuals currently under this classification but for every American and the integrity of our institutions.

Every year, the Samuel J. Heyman Public Service to America Medals are awarded to esteemed Federal employees who are recognized by their Agency colleagues and the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service for their distinguished service. This year, the seventh State admitted to the Union—my home State of Maryland—is proud to celebrate seven outstanding individuals nominated as finalists. All of them are highly deserving of recognition for their service.

Today, I would like to take a moment to thank these Marylanders:

Wanda Brown and Darnita Trower of the Internal Revenue Service; Judy Chen and Jay Evans of the USDA Agricultural Research Service; Hari Kalla of the Federal

Highway Administration; Marc Levitan of the National Institute of Standards and Technology; and Janet Woodcock of the Food and Drug Administration.

I thank them for their exceptional service to the American people.

Just 7 percent of America's Federal workers are under the age of 30. I join President Biden in urging young Americans to consider careers in public service. We need your talents, your energy, your ideas, and your idealism to ensure that America remains prosperous, secure, and a beacon of liberty for all humanity.

I hope we can all agree that we want the best and brightest to serve. These individuals and their fellow honorees represent the best our Federal workforce has to offer. But we should be grateful for all public servants who are in every State and Territory of our country and who go to work each day determined to make a positive difference for their fellow Americans. We should be grateful all year long.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE BAKERY ON BROADWAY

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. 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 The Bakery on Broadway of Audubon, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2020, Kate Hargens founded The Bakery on Broadway to revitalize downtown Audubon. Kate grew up in California and spent several years working as a food scientist before moving to the rural Iowa town. She started her career as a baker who made custom cakes in her family home before purchasing a local coffee shop. The Bakery on Broadway started with Kate and one full-time employee and now employs 15 people. The business serves fresh pastries made daily, custom cakes, smoothies, and coffees, in addition to featuring a breakfast and lunch menu that brings "West Coast"-inspired foods to Iowa.

The Bakery on Broadway also serves as an important community space in Audubon. It hosts seasonal "What's Happening in Audubon" events, which is a weekly public forum held on Tuesdays in the late fall and early spring. The events bring the community together to discuss a broad range of topics important to the area.

The Bakery on Broadway is involved in the Iowa art community as well. They have a retail space in the bakery that sells art from Iowa artists. Since early 2023, they have hosted the Art on Broadway event that showcases artwork customers can purchase. The bakery also recently unveiled a mural on the newly renovated side of their build-

ing painted by Des Moines artist Jenna Brownlee.

Kate Hargens is actively involved in the Audubon community. Kate was instrumental in founding the nonprofit Children's Nest Childcare Center and previously served as the president. She also served on the fundraising committee for the Audubon Rec Center and was on the board of the Rose Theater. In 2016, Kate won the Citizen of the Year Award from the Audubon Chamber of Commerce for her work in the community. The Bakery on Broadway was praised by Travel Iowa and the Des Moines Register for their cuisine. In May 2023, the business was one featured on ABC affiliate KETV on their "Hit the Road, Jack, Audubon, Iowa" segment. Due to Kate and the team's hard work, The Bakery on Broadway celebrated its fourth business anniversary in 2024.

The Bakery on Broadway's commitment to providing high-quality food, coffee, and community events in Audubon is clear. I want to congratulate Kate Hargens and the entire team at The Bakery on Broadway for their continued dedication to the Audubon community. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa. ●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, 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. 272. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize transportation for Government astronauts returning from space between their residence and various locations, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6972. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to require an Executive agency whose head is a member of the National Security Council to notify the Executive Office of the President, the Comptroller General of the United States, and congressional leadership of such head becoming medically incapacitated within 24 hours, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7219. An act to ensure that Federal agencies rely on the best reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economic, and statistical information and evidence to develop, issue or inform the public of the nature and bases of Federal agency rules and guidance, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7524. An act to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the submission of reports on certain information technology services funds to Congress before expenditures may be made, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7525. An act to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to agencies requiring special districts to be recognized as local government for the purpose of Federal financial assistance determinations.

H.R. 7527. An act to direct the United States Postal Service to issue regulations requiring Postal Service employees and contractors to report to the Postal Service traffic crashes involving vehicles carrying mail that result in injury or death, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7528. An act to amend section 206 of the E-Government Act of 2002 to improve the integrity and management of mass comments and computergenerated comments in the regulatory review process, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 34. Concurrent resolution establishing the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the inauguration of the President-elect and Vice President-elect of the United States on January 20, 2025.

S. Con. Res. 35. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda and Emancipation Hall of the Capitol by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in connection with the proceedings and ceremonies conducted for the inauguration of the President-elect and the Vice President-elect of the United States.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bill with amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 2073. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to require agencies to include a list of outdated or duplicative reporting requirements in annual budget justifications, 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. 272. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to authorize transportation for Government astronauts returning from space between their residence and various locations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 6972. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to require an Executive agency whose head is a member of the National Security Council to notify the Executive Office of the President, the Comptroller General of the United States, and congressional leadership of such head becoming medically incapacitated within 24 hours, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 7219. An act to ensure that Federal agencies rely on the best reasonably available scientific, technical, demographic, economic, and statistical information and evidence to develop, issue or inform the public of the nature and bases of Federal agency rules and guidance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 7524. An act to amend title 40, United States Code, to require the submission of reports on certain information technology