

## GUATEMALA

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, last December I joined Senators TIM Kaine, DICK Durbin, JEFF Merkley, and LAPHONZA Butler and Representatives NORMA J. Torres and DELIA C. Ramirez, on a trip to Guatemala. We arrived just weeks before the scheduled inauguration of President Bernardo Arevalo, who had been elected by an overwhelming majority. The Guatemalan people had voted decisively to reject the corruption, impunity, and malfeasance that had been the hallmark of successive governments in that country.

We went to Guatemala to speak directly to Mr. Arevalo's supporters, as well as to the powerful forces in Guatemala, including the Attorney General, opposition members of Congress, magistrates, and those who were corruptly conspiring to prevent President Arevalo from taking office. Our purpose was to make clear that if their efforts to subvert the will of the people succeeded, it would have profoundly negative long-term consequences for U.S. relations—both economic and security—for whoever illegally seized power. It would propel the country down a path of authoritarianism and economic decline much like Nicaragua, leading to further social division, political instability, and isolation.

Their efforts to overturn the election and undermine the people were flagrant; the Attorney General went so far as to attempt to nullify the fair election of then President-elect Arevalo shortly after we met with officials of the outgoing administration to urge a peaceful transfer of power.

Ultimately, the efforts to prevent President Arevalo from taking office failed. But his detractors were far from defeated. They immediately set their sights on preventing President Arevalo from carrying out his anti-corruption agenda and forcing him from office. Those efforts continue today.

I mention this because I recently met with a delegation of Guatemalan indigenous women, led by Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchú. Although their numbers are woefully under-represented in the three branches of government, I have never met more determined and courageous women. Women who have experienced extreme poverty, violence, and loss, yet who have become leaders in their communities and fiercely dedicated to preserving their indigenous identity, improving the lives of their families, and defending Guatemala's fragile democracy.

The United States strongly supports President Arevalo, who offers the best chance Guatemala has had in decades to chart a new path for his country—a path grounded in the rule of law, in the institutions of democracy, in transparency, in accountability. And despite the efforts of the corrupt networks whose only interest is in using the institutions of power and privilege to enrich themselves, I am hopeful because President Arevalo has the support of

Guatemala's indigenous population, exemplified by the fearless women I met this week.

They are not going to let what they won freely and fairly at the ballot box be stolen from them. They are not going to allow a minority of crooked elites deny them and their children the chance for a better life. They have an ambitious social, economic, and political reform agenda. They are committed to working to strengthen education, economic opportunity, equality, democracy, and justice. It is in the interest of the Arevalo administration and the United States to help them achieve these goals for the benefit of all Guatemalans.

## 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILWAUKEE NAACP

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, today I rise to recognize the Milwaukee NAACP on its 100th anniversary. It gives me great pleasure to honor this remarkable organization and to commemorate this historic milestone.

The Milwaukee NAACP branch was established in 1924, which grew out of the national quest to eradicate the eruptions of anti-Black violence. For 100 years, the Milwaukee NAACP has stood at the forefront of the civil rights movement, unwavering in its efforts to achieve parity in politics, education, society, and the economy, while striving to eliminate racial prejudice.

During the emergence of the NAACP, millions of African-Americans were migrating from the south to northern States like Wisconsin in search of greater opportunity and a better quality of life. The newcomers soon learned that they had not escaped racial discrimination in jobs, education, and housing.

Throughout its early years, led by prominent middle-class African-American professionals, including Wilbur Halyard, Ardie Halyard, and James W. Dorsey, the Milwaukee NAACP was instrumental in battling the racial discrimination through political lobbying, legal intervention, and direct-action protest.

Over the past century, the NAACP has achieved significant progress in empowering African-Americans to reach their greatest potential. By supporting initiatives to improve the lives of those who are often left behind, the NAACP has instigated substantial transformations in Wisconsin's largest city.

Despite the NAACP's tireless efforts, the African-American community in Milwaukee continues to face daunting challenges. Factors such as wages, educational outcomes, economic conditions, neighborhood safety, and the opportunity to achieve the American dream are regrettably still influenced by a person's ZIP Code or the color of his or her skin.

By working together, we can ensure that African-Americans and all community members are educated, em-

ployed, and empowered to succeed. The NAACP's persistent commitment to improvement fosters hope for the next generation of leaders in Milwaukee's communities of color.

As we honor the Milwaukee NAACP's achievements and contemplate future challenges, I will be forever grateful for the branch's achievements over the past century, and I look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

## RECOGNIZING THE MARYLAND ATHLETES AT THE 2024 OLYMPICS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to honor the 26 athletes with ties to Maryland who participated at the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics in Paris, France. Olympic athletes compete at the highest level of their craft, showing incredible determination and perseverance to reach their goals. Therefore, I would like to recognize the following athletes for their hard work and successes during the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics:

Katie Ledecky of Bethesda and alumni of Stone Ridge School of Sacred Heart, who won silver in the 4x200m freestyle relay, dominated the 1500m freestyle, won gold in the 800m freestyle, and bronze in the 400m freestyle. Ledecky now has 14 Olympic medals, making her the most decorated female Olympian in U.S. history.

Phoebe Bacon of Chevy Chase and Erin Gemmell of Potomac, who also competed on the U.S. Swim Team, with Gemmell taking silver in the 4x200m freestyle relay.

Alyssa Thomas, a 10-year veteran of the WNBA and University of Maryland Alumni, who won her first gold medal during the U.S. Women's Basketball final against France.

Kevin Durant of Suitland, an NBA superstar who won his fifth gold medal during the U.S. Men's Basketball final against France.

Thea Lafond, another UMD Terp and alumni of Montgomery County Public Schools, who won Dominica's first gold medal ever in the triple jump.

Aaron Brooks of Hagerstown and Helen Maroulis of Rockville, who both won a Bronze Medal in their weight class of wrestling. Maroulis is the first-ever American to win three Olympic medals in women's wrestling.

Aaron Russell of Ellicott City and the Team USA Men's Volleyball Team, who won a bronze medal in their match against Italy.

Masai Russell of Potomac, who won gold in the 100m hurdle.

Quincy Wilson of Potomac, who became the youngest Maryland Olympian and track and field gold medalist in the history of the Olympics for running in the team qualifier for the 4x400m relay.

Skateboarder Rudy Lilley of Ocean City, the youngest Maryland woman at 17 to compete at the Olympic Games.

Grace Balsdon, Leah Crouse, Brooke DeBerdine, Emma DeBerdine, Kelee Lepage, and Nike Lorenze, alumnae of University Maryland, who competed for their respective countries' field hockey teams.

Treyon Jenifer of Huntingtown, who won his third Gold-Medal for wheelchair basketball.

Noah Hanssen of Ellicott City, who placed fourth in wheelchair fencing.

Tatyana McFadden of Columbia, who earned a silver medal in the women's T54 100m, her 20th medal.

Daniel Ramanchuk of Mt. Airy, who won a gold medal in Men's T54 5,000m and a bronze medal in Men's T54 400m.

Jessica Long of Baltimore, who won a gold medal in the women's 400m freestyle swim, making her one of the top Paralympians of all times with 29 medals.

Zachary Shattuck of Mt. Airy, who won a silver medal in men's mixed 4x50m freestyle relay swim.

On behalf of all Marylanders, I thank them for representing Maryland in the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics and congratulate them on this major achievement.

#### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE NEE

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate George Nee, president of the AFL-CIO of Rhode Island, on his upcoming retirement and to thank him for his years of service and unwavering dedication to improving the lives of working people.

For George, organized labor serves as the "People's Lobbyist," ensuring that the concerns of working people are given due consideration when critical decisions are made. In his retirement letter, he wrote that "organized labor has a right and a responsibility to exercise our voice when and where decisions are made at every level of government. These decisions impact the quality of life and economy of our state, and we must be there."

His leadership—tenacious but pragmatic and always with decency and integrity—has contributed to the vibrancy of the union movement in Rhode Island, making it one of the States with the highest percentage of union workers in the Nation.

From the beginning, George acted on the belief that working people have a right to have a voice, no matter if they are working in the fields, on the factory floors, in offices, in healthcare facilities, in schools, or on construction sites.

As a young man, he left the comfort of Boston College to earn \$5 dollars per week, plus room and board, to join farmworkers in organizing successful grape and lettuce boycotts. He was inspired by Cesar Chavez, and joined him on a pilgrimage across the farmlands of California, serving as his personal bodyguard.

Rhode Island called him back. In 1976, he organized jewelry workers, clerical workers, and healthcare workers and founded SEIU Local 76, where he served as president until he joined the Rhode Island AFL-CIO in 1983 as a staff representative. George quickly rose through the ranks at the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. By 1985, he was elected secretary-treasurer and, in 2009, president—a role that he will step down from on October 11.

George's strong moral compass and steady leadership has been a beacon for public servants and community leaders across the State. He has been a mentor and a trusted adviser to me and to so many others who share his goals of a just and prosperous Nation where workers' rights are always protected.

In a 2018 interview with Rhode Island Public Radio's Scott MacKay, George

said: "We have a solemn obligation to the people who came before us to fight back and protect these rights for future generations."

As he begins his next chapter, George can rest assured that he fulfilled that solemn promise and has equipped a new generation for the battles and the challenges ahead. Rhode Island is a stronger State, and we are a better Nation because of George Nee's leadership.

I thank him and his wonderful family, especially his beloved wife Ann, for their great friendship and kindness over many years and for their great inspiration. George always reminded us, by his actions, that hard work for a just cause was the greatest and most satisfying contribution that we can make.

I wish George a happy and healthy retirement. He has earned it.

#### TRIBUTE TO GEORGE NEE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I rise today to offer my sincerest congratulations to my friend George Nee on his upcoming retirement as president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO. George is a friend of many years, and I have long admired his dedication to fighting for Rhode Islanders—for good-paying jobs, affordable healthcare, safe workplaces, and retirement security.

George was born in Syracuse, NY, and first came to New England in the late 1960s to attend Boston College. He left his studies to oversee the United Farm Workers grape boycott in Massachusetts and, a few years later, came to Rhode Island for the Farm Workers' lettuce boycott. Through his work, he met legendary activist and organizer Cesar Chavez and became part of the security team protecting Chavez as he worked to organize farm workers. Inspired by Chavez, George returned to the Ocean State in 1976 to form his own union, which would become the Service Employees International Union Local 76, representing jewelry, clerical, and healthcare workers.

In 1983, George joined the Rhode Island AFL-CIO as its executive director, then secretary-treasurer, then president. Under George's leadership, the AFL-CIO improved access to opportunities for workers, including Climate Jobs Rhode Island, an initiative to help transition Rhode Island toward a clean energy economy. Along the way, he met and married Anne Sliney, the best of a great many good decisions he has made. She has made her own magnificent contributions, and together, they raised three children Katie, Brigid, and Patrick, who are each following the family tradition of making a difference in ways that matter.

I got to know George best in the early 90s when Rhode Island's workers' compensation system was in crisis. George brought the union voice and perspective to the table and advocated for reforms to revamp the broken system. The result was a law that dra-

matically reduced costs without cutting benefits—a win for workers and employers. George was one of the keys to the law's passage and went on to protect that reform and the workers' compensation system over many years. George stands in a Rhode Island tradition of leadership in the national labor movement, along with legends like Ed McElroy, Armand Sabitoni, Frank Montanaro, and now Michael Sabitoni. George puts his head down and works hard, so workers in our State can hold their heads high.

Bravo, my friend. We owe you a debt of gratitude and appreciation for uplifting the lives and livelihoods of workers across our State. My very best wishes on your exciting next chapter.

#### REMEMBERING J. MICHAEL DOWNEY

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of one of Rhode Island's great champions for working people, J. Michael Downey, president of Rhode Island Council 94 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.

Mike was known as a family man, an organizer, a tough negotiator, and a fierce protector of his members' wages, working conditions, and benefits. He was a loving husband to his wife of nearly 50 years, Claudette, a devoted father to his three children, and a dotting grandfather to his nine grandchildren. He was also a beloved brother to his brothers and sisters in the union movement.

Mike came from a family of union organizers. His father was the president of Local 28, the Plumber's Union and executive director of the Allied Building Trades. His grandfather was president of the Bricklayer's Union, Local 1. Mike was a master plumber and practiced his trade at the University of Rhode Island for 27 years, during which he also served as the president of Local 528.

He later brought his expertise to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, where he served as the chief plumbing investigator. In 2005, Mike was first elected president of Council 94, and he was re-elected five times. He also served on the executive board of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO and the Institute of Labor Studies. Under his leadership, Council 94 increased member participation, expanded and enhanced its political activities, and prioritized organizing, adding new locals.

Just days before his passing, Mike helped negotiate a new 3-year contract with the State that boosted wages and enhanced benefits. The contract was overwhelmingly approved by the rank-and-file members—a final addition to his long list of accomplishments as a union leader.

Mike was known for his kindness and compassion. He is remembered for his