

of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that the recipient can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the recipient.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to provide a brief statement on the rollcall votes on December 2, 2024. I was unable to attend the votes, but had I been here on Monday, December 2, 2024, I would have voted yea on vote No. 304, on the nomination of Anne Hwang, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

I rise to provide a brief statement on the rollcall votes on December 2, 2024. I was unable to attend the votes, but had I been here on Monday, December 2, 2024, I would have voted yea on vote No. 305, on the nomination of Brian Edward Murphy, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR BOBBY BROWN

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, today, I rise to pay tribute to an exceptional officer in the U.S. Army, MAJ Bobby Brown. Major Brown, an Active-Duty adjutant general officer, was competitively selected to serve as an Army congressional fellow for the fiscal year 2022.

Hailing from Lincoln, NE, Major Brown was assigned to support our neighbors to the south, working with Senator JERRY MORAN of Kansas. During his fellowship, he gained valuable insights into the workings of Congress and its relationship with the U.S. military, while also advising Senator MORAN on defense and veterans' issues. His dedication and professionalism were evident in every task he undertook.

Major Brown's journey from Nebraska to Washington, DC, is marked by a distinguished record of service. After earning his undergraduate degree at Nebraska Wesleyan University and commissioning as an infantry officer through the University of Nebraska at Lincoln ROTC program, he held various tactical and operational positions. These included roles in the 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Ranger Battalion, the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, and 7th Army Training Command.

His early years of service honed his discipline, diligence, and dedication, shaping both his career and character. In the infantry, he served as an infantry rifle platoon leader and executive

officer, roles that were foundational for his leadership skills. In 2016, Major Brown deployed to Afghanistan as the deputy chief of operations for the 2nd Ranger Battalion, deepening his understanding of America's military role abroad and his commitment to our national security.

Transitioning to the Adjutant General's Corps in 2017, Major Brown excelled in human resources roles, serving as a battalion human resources officer in the 2nd Ranger Battalion and 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. His natural people skills and leadership potential led to his selection for two company commands—one for the headquarters and headquarters company for 7th Army Training Command and the other for U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, both located in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

For the past 2 years, he has served in the Army's congressional budget liaison office, where he has played a crucial role in answering congressional requests for information, staffing engagements between Army senior leaders and Members of Congress, and leading congressional delegations abroad to conduct defense oversight.

Any tribute to Major Brown would be incomplete without acknowledging the unwavering support of his wife Michelle and the joy brought by their 1-year-old son John Robert Brown. Michelle has stood by Major Brown at every step of his journey, providing love, care, and wisdom.

Major Brown's lengthy and diverse career is filled with experiences that have enriched him both as an officer and a person. It is no surprise that he has received numerous awards and commendations, including the Ranger Tab. Nebraska is proud to call Major Brown one of its own, as he continues a treasured legacy of Nebraskans dedicated to protecting our State and our Nation.

On behalf of the State of Nebraska, the U.S. Senate, and a grateful nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending Major Brown for his service. We wish Bobby, Michelle, and John all the best as they continue their journey in the U.S. Army.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR TIARA PURO

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, today, I rise to pay tribute to an exceptional officer in the U.S. Air Force, Maj. Tiara Puro.

Major Puro was competitively selected to represent the Department of the Air Force in the Department of Defense Legislative Fellows Program, where she has worked with my office over the past year.

Though Major Puro is not originally from my State, she fits right in—a perfect example of what we call "Nebraska nice." Each day, Major Puro is known to walk into each room in our office, greeting every member of our staff warmly. Generous with her time and expertise, she cheerfully answers ques-

tions about our national defense from interns and staff.

Major Puro did spend time in my home State of Nebraska. She earned a degree in general studies from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, graduating in 2011. But it was before her time in Nebraska, back in her home State of Utah, that her experience with the military began.

Major Puro enlisted in the Utah National Guard as a paralegal specialist while still in high school. Once a month, she drove to the armory in Vernal to train with the 1457th Engineer Battalion as part of the Delayed Entry Program. A week after graduating from high school, she shipped to basic combat training at Fort Jackson, SC.

Major Puro's decision to serve our country in the military solidified that fateful day in September 2001. After the second plane collided with the south tower of the World Trade Center, she called her unit to ask what she could do to help. Major Puro was among the 4,500 Utah National Guard members who provided security for the Winter Olympic games in Utah a few months later.

After earning her bachelor's degree in Nebraska, Major Puro commissioned in the Air Force as a personnel officer. Her first assignment was to Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling in Washington, DC, as the individual mobilization augmentee to the commander of the military personnel flight. This assignment trained Major Puro in the organizational and interpersonal skills she has used throughout her career.

From 2013 to 2015, she volunteered to serve on an extended Active-Duty tour in support of the Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs (SAF/IA) in the International Airmen Division. Over the years, Major Puro has deployed twice, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve. These deployments added new dimensions to Major Puro's understanding of our military and its operations.

In 2019, Major Puro was assigned as the operations officer for the 301st Force Support Squadron at the Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base in Texas. There, she contributed to a team that keeps the 301st Fighter Wing up and running. The team managed required paperwork, tracked the movement of the wing's members, and helped the 301st Logistics Readiness Squadron move resources.

Prior to her selection for the Legislative Fellows Program, Major Puro served as the chief of the Active Guard Reserve Management Branch of the Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center at Buckley Space Force Base, CO. There, she oversaw management of the Active Guard Reserve Program, supporting strategic guidance and operational execution of 6,003 positions.

Major Puro has spent years serving our Nation. And anyone who knows

Major Puro knows her commitment runs in the family. All five of the Puro sisters serve in America's military, whether in the Air Force, Army, or Navy. Major Puro is the oldest of the five, and she has led each of her sisters in this direction. Major Puro even administered the oath of office to commission one of her sisters as an officer. The service-oriented siblings have become known as "sisters in arms."

Major Puro is an outstanding, experienced officer who has spent years serving our country with diligence and excellence. She is an officer of strong character, displaying kindness, integrity, and dedication wherever she goes. She has served our Nation well in the Air Force, and she has served Nebraska well as a legislative fellow in my office.

On behalf of the State of Nebraska, the U.S. Senate, and a grateful nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending Major Puro for her service. We wish Tiara all the best as she continues her journey in the U.S. Air Force.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WES COLLINS

• **Mr. CRAPO.** Mr. President, with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH and Representative MIKE SIMPSON, we congratulate Wes Collins as he retires from serving as Butte County Commissioner.

Wes Collins has served the people of Butte County in multiple positions spanning over 33 years. He began his career in Butte County as a deputy sheriff in 1991 and served in the capacity until he was appointed sheriff on September 8, 2003. During his tenure as sheriff, he ably took on many responsibilities. He was the Butte County emergency manager for 10 years, a member of the Idaho Sheriffs Association's Marketing Committee, played an instrumental role in Safe & Drug Free Schools from 2005 to 2018, served as president of the Butte County Sheriff's Christmas for the Children Wish Upon a Star Program from 2003 to 2018, and served on the Butte County Board of Guardians and the Pretty City Committee.

Wes has always been willing to step up and ensure the individuals of his community received the care they needed. Wes played a notable role in the region's search and rescue efforts, especially involving mountain climbing accidents. He contributed to public safety by responding to incidents in challenging terrains like Mount Borah, where climbers often encountered difficulties. Collins was also recognized for his involvement in documenting mountaineering history, including a significant traverse of the Lost River Range, which highlighted his personal climbing achievements and contributions to Idaho's climbing community. Wes served as Butte County sheriff until his retirement from law enforce-

ment in 2018. Following his retirement from law enforcement, Wes believed he still had something to offer the community, so he ran for the open commissioner's seat and won.

Wes took office as a Butte County commissioner on January 14, 2019, and continued his work to improve the communities of Butte County. As commissioner, Wes has played a key role in ensuring local tax dollars are being spent thoughtfully. He has served on various board positions, including the Moore Community RV Park Project, Rural Development Association, and the 3B Juvenile Corrections Facility Board. Wes has been an institution in Butte County, and his leadership will be missed.

Beyond his service to the communities, Wes is an avid outdoorsman, never missing an opportunity to hike to a mountain lake to fish, downhill ski, hunt, and practice photography. Many of his prints are hanging in the county buildings.

Wes, thank you for your decades of service to Idahoans. We congratulate you on a career well spent and express our heartfelt gratitude for keeping Idahoans safe and strengthening the communities and landscapes we hold dear.●

RECOGNIZING 40 YEARS OF METRA

• **Ms. DUCKWORTH.** Mr. President, Metra is celebrating 40 years of connecting travelers across Chicago and northeastern Illinois.

Chicago has long been a major rail hub. To this day, the city has more tracks radiating in more directions than any other city in North America. For most of its history, commuter service in Chicagoland was operated by various private rail companies. By the 1970s, however, commuter service was struggling, and rail companies were threatening to discontinue it. In 1974, voters in northeast Illinois approved creation of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and in 1984, RTA established a special commuter rail division which soon became known as Metra.

That upstart wasted no time growing. In 1987, Metra acquired Illinois Central Gulf's electric line to University Park, took over the route to Joliet, and acquired two Milwaukee District lines and all their assets in 1989. Further growth followed.

Today, Metra operates 11 lines and is the Nation's fourth busiest commuter rail by trips and the largest by route miles. When it comes to beating rush hour congestion on Chicago's expressways, Metra truly is "the way to really fly."

Metra is also embracing the future of clean transportation with battery-powered trainsets. By 2028, its riders will be among the first in the Nation to experience battery-powered zero-emission trainsets.

I congratulate Metra on a remarkable 40 years, and look forward to more reliable, affordable, and accessible

commuter rail service in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING THE BAKERY UNLIMITED

• **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 Unlimited of Winterset, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1984, Jim and Marcia Sparks opened The Bakery Unlimited on Main Street in Winterset. Jim was working in insurance when an unusual opportunity presented itself in the form of a pizza oven, a bread rounder, and mixer. Initially, the couple purchased the equipment with hopes of reselling it, but they changed their plans when a historic 1883 building on Winterset's Main Street was looking for a new owner and recognized the community's need for a warm and welcoming gathering place; the Sparks decided to transform the historic building into a bakery. Leaning on Marcia's background as a food nutritional research graduate from Iowa State University and her collection of crafted recipes, the couple brought The Bakery Unlimited to life.

From the beginning, The Bakery Unlimited delighted the community with old-fashioned baked goods made from scratch. While the bakery features a wide variety of offerings from breads and bagels to pies and cakes, its signature items are doughnuts and apple fritters. These fritters are made using Red Delicious apples grown from the Sparks' own orchard, a tribute to Madison County, the birthplace of the iconic apple.

In November 2020, Winterset lost a beloved community figure when Marcia Sparks passed away. It was my honor to meet Marcia in August of 2019, to bake alongside her, and learn how to make her famous apple fritters. Marcia was incredibly kind, greeting everyone who entered the bakery with a friendly smile and warm welcome. After she passed away in November 2020, her legacy lives on through the impact she had on the community, as well as through her daughter Katie Sparks, who grew up immersed in the bakery. Katie learned her mother's many baking traditions and recipes. Today, Katie manages all the baking and oversees the business' day-to-day operations. Marcia was a member of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, as well as the president of the Retail Bakers Association, providing knowledge and expertise to aspiring bakers across the country. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Marcia baked and donated 250 loaves of bread for members of the Winterset Community. The bakery has continued