

law and the environment. It can be done and will be done.

And, folks, the partnership between Angola and the United States also extends to supporting peace and security in this region and beyond.

Pl- —Pr- —President Lourenço, I want to thank him for his leadership and mediation in regional conflicts. I also want to thank him for Angola speaking out against Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. It matters. It matters when leaders speak out.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, I am in the final weeks of my presidency. You don't have to clap for that. You can if you want.

But I wanted to come to Angola. Although I've been chairman of the Africa America subcommittee for a long time, I had never made it to Angola. Because although I don't know exactly what the future will hold, I know the future runs through Angola, through Africa. I mean it sincerely. I'm not kidding.

I know that any nation that wants to thrive in the next century must work as partners with workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses here in Africa. I know that the connection between our communities, our universities, our sports, our civil societies, our families, our people will only grow deeper. We have to stay focused.

The story of Angola and the United States holds a lesson for the world: two nations with a shared history in evil of human bondage; two nations on opposite sides of the Cold War, defining struggle in the late part of the 20th century; and now, two nations standing shoulder to shoulder, working together every day for the mutual benefit of our people.

It's a reminder that no nation need be permanently a—the adversary of another, a testament to the human capacity for reconciliation, and proof that from every—from the horrors of slavery and war, there is a way forward.

So, I stand here today—I mean this sincerely—deeply optimistic.

When I—by the way, 20 years ago, when I was a senator, I had a cranial aneurysm. They s—got me to the hospital in time. I remember asking the doctor, "What are my ch—"—he said, "Oh, your chances are good. They're about 30 percent." When it was all over, he was deciding whether or not it was congenital or environmental. And I said, "I don't give a damn. I'm here." He said, "You know what your problem is, Senator? You're a congenital optimist." I am.

About the possibilities and progress that lie just beyond the horizon. Together, we can and will chart a future worthy [future worthy] of great nations, worthy of the highest aspirations of our people. We just have to remember who we are: We're Angolans; we're Americans.

As I often say in Ameri- —to the American people: There's nothing—

nothing beyond our capacity if we work together. And today, I say to the people of Angola and all the people of Africa, there is nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.

Thank you. And God bless you and keep you all safe. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And thank you for waiting.

And I got my hat. Thanks, everybody. I really mean it. You're very patient.

#### TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of our colleagues who will conclude their service in this body at the end of the 118th Congress: Senators MIKE BRAUN, SHERROD BROWN, Laphonza Butler, BEN CARDIN, TOM CARPER, BOB CASEY, JOE MANCHIN, MITT ROMNEY, KYRSTEN SINEMA, DEBBIE STABENOW, and JON TESTER.

Each of these colleagues and friends has made important contributions to our Nation. And while there is no greater job than being a U.S. Senator, it is a job that requires tremendous dedication and sacrifice. So I thank these colleagues and their families for all that they have done.

I had the privilege to serve with Senator MIKE BRAUN on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where we led the legislative branch subcommittee for 2 years. In the aftermath of the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, we were able to come together to make critical investments to improve the security of the congressional campus while also safeguarding Senators, Representatives, and staff working in their home States and districts. I appreciated MIKE's preparation, his thoughtful ideas, and his commitment to getting the job done. I know he will bring the same commitment as he leads the State of Indiana as its next Governor.

My dear friend Senator SHERROD BROWN has been a champion of working men and women for his entire life. He has done more to protect the jobs and livelihoods of autoworkers, steelworkers, construction workers, truck drivers, transit workers, and virtually every blue-collar profession than anyone serving in Congress today. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Ohio workers fighting to save factories and pensions. He stood up against unfair competition and bad trade deals. He fought to secure funding for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and NASA's John Glenn Research Center. And with the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, he has championed investments that will benefit working people for years to come. I have been fortunate to be at SHERROD's side as he has quarterbacked Democrats on the Senate Banking Committee over the last decade, including 4 years as chairman. He guided us through the COVID-19 pandemic and through the largest bank failures since

the Great Recession. He worked on a bipartisan basis to crack down on fentanyl trafficking and to advance meaningful sanctions on our adversaries. He also worked with Vice President-elect VANCE and Senator BOB CASEY to advance bipartisan rail safety legislation in the wake of the derailment and fire in East Palestine, OH. Through his temperament and work ethic, SHERROD has been a real champion of working Americans. With two grandchildren in Rhode Island, SHERROD is already an honorary Rhode Islander, and I look forward to seeing him in the Ocean State frequently.

The prospect of succeeding a Senate legend and representing the Nation's most populous State with only 14 months to make a mark would have been intimidating to anyone. But Senator Laphonza Butler embraced the challenge, becoming a respected voice on the Judiciary, Banking, Homeland Security, and Rules Committees. She worked to champion the needs of her State, and she worked across the aisle on legislation to help advance the interests of children and families. I am delighted that in her final week in office she was able to secure passage of legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, a trailblazer for Congress and America.

In the tradition of Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes, Senator BEN CARDIN has been a smart, principled, pragmatic, and, most of all, effective Senator for the State of Maryland. With over two decades of service in the House before being elected to the Senate, BEN's policy expertise runs the gamut. Mastering the intricacies of the Tax Code, trade, Social Security and Medicare, he is also a leader on the international stage, where his advice and wisdom are often sought and followed. A champion of human rights and good government, BEN joined John McCain in originating the Global Magnitsky Act, which allows the United States to sanction foreign government officials who are human rights offenders. In the years since, he has worked to expand the Magnitsky Act to cover more regimes that were oppressing their own people. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he has been at the center of critical debates on Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict, providing wise, steady leadership on these very challenging topics.

Senator TOM CARPER has been a friend and great leader. He is the last of a generation of Vietnam veterans who have served in the Senate. As such, he has focused on supporting national defense and our veterans. He has also worked on eliminating waste and supporting smart investments in our transportation and water infrastructure. TOM has always found a way to work across the aisle on issues he has cared about. Indeed, as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, he led the effort to craft the bipartisan infrastructure law, which is

channeling funding into fixing our highways and bridges, as well as funding programs to get lead and other contaminants out of drinking water. He crafted the Water Resources Development Act of 2024, which is named in his honor. TOM has also been a leader on climate change, helping craft the Inflation Reduction Act and supporting climate mitigation and resilience efforts. His work in support of his dear friend and former colleague President Biden in support of this legislation over the last 4 years will make a huge difference for Americans for decades to come.

Senator BOB CASEY has been a champion of the most vulnerable: children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and people just trying to make ends meet. He has been a leading Senate advocate for addressing food insecurity, supporting programs like the emergency food assistance program (TEFAP) and SNAP. He is the author of the bipartisan ABLE Act, which allows individuals with disabilities to save funds for care and qualified expenses without jeopardizing their eligibility for other Federal assistance. And he has introduced legislation to expand and build on this successful initiative. BOB also wrote the Campus SAVE Act to create uniform reporting for sexual violence on college campuses. It is a testament to BOB's character that so many Pennsylvania's political leaders from both parties have praised his work ethic and commitment to helping the people of the Commonwealth.

Senator JOE MANCHIN has been at the fulcrum of power in the Senate over the last 4 years. In working to address the interests of his State, he has been unafraid to challenge and change orthodoxy. While his views may differ from others in our party, there is no doubt that he has done much to advance the goal all Democrats share: making life better for average Americans. Quite frankly, without his leadership, we would not have the bipartisan infrastructure law or the Inflation Reduction Act. And because of JOE's involvement, we were able to ensure that all of the investments in the Inflation Reduction Act were fully offset by ensuring that corporations and the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share of taxes. That is an important achievement, and JOE deserves full credit for it.

Senator MITT ROMNEY is an extraordinary American. Respected across the aisle, across the country, and throughout the world, he has held high office in two States: Senator for Utah and Governor of Massachusetts. He has been the Republican nominee for the Presidency. After becoming CEO of the Salt Lake Olympics organizing committee, he helped save the 2002 Winter Games from disarray and mismanagement, making it one of the most successful Winter Olympics ever. MITT really has done it all. He has even laced up the gloves and boxed with heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield. Now, the politics of Massachusetts and

Utah are vastly different, but MITT has shown that he can bring people with different outlooks together to get things done. And truth be told, the reforms to the healthcare system that he implemented when he was Governor of Massachusetts helped shape the Affordable Care Act at the Federal level. As a Member of the Senate, MITT has been a courageous defender of democracy, willing to put country ahead of party, even when it meant harsh criticism. I have been delighted to work with MITT, and I am proud to be joining in introducing his final piece of bipartisan legislation, the Preserving American Dominance in AI Act, which we will be working to pass next year.

Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA has been a skilled and pragmatic dealmaker, working on a variety of important bills from the bipartisan infrastructure law to the bipartisan immigration bill, which unfortunately, was scuttled at the last minute at the request of President Trump. I know that in her next chapter Senator SINEMA will continue to work hard to bring people together, build consensus, and solve problems.

Senator DEBBIE STABENOW has been a colleague, friend, and leader here in the Senate since she arrived in 2001. She has been a defender of the auto industry, helping U.S. automakers emerge from the Great Recession and turn to a new, greener future. She has also been at the forefront of revitalizing Michigan cities through initiatives like the New Markets Tax Credit and through investments to remove lead from drinking water. With Senator Roy Blunt, she helped expand the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Program nationwide under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and she has championed funding for community health centers along with Senator ROGER WICKER. And as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, she has fought to expand child nutrition programs, which have been so critical in reducing poverty over the last 4 years and in helping kids get a great start in life. I am going to miss Debbie and her ability to work hard and achieve results for people who need help the most.

Senator JON TESTER is a big man with a big heart. He will tell you he is just a simple farmer from Big Sandy, MT, and that is true. Running the family farm remains the center of his life and defines his character, but it is not the full story. His interests, knowledge, and intellect are wide-ranging and deep. He can speak with authority on complex banking, foreign policy, defense, and veterans issues, as well as agriculture. As a plain-spoken Westerner, he can put these complicated topics in terms everybody can understand, usually with a healthy dose of humor. But when it comes to hard work, JON is no-nonsense. He is a serious legislator, particularly as chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. His work to pass the PACT Act has thrown a lifeline to veterans who

were exposed to toxins as a result of their service. Millions of veterans and their families are receiving lifesaving benefits as the result of his work. And without JON, it wouldn't have happened.

These colleagues have made the Senate and our Nation a better place because of their service. While their time in this body will be ending with the 118th Congress, I know each of them will continue to work to make a positive difference for the country.

#### TRIBUTE TO SARAH BENZING

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my longtime chief of staff, my campaign manager in 2012, and a proud daughter of the Midwest, Sarah Benzing.

Sarah grew up in Neola, IA, a town of about 800 people. There were just 36 people in her rural high school in the Tri-Center Community School District.

Sarah was raised by her parents Nick and Diana Benzing, in a family of farmers, truck drivers, and union members: AFSCME, IAM, NEA, UAW.

And Sarah has brought those working-class values to everything she has done throughout an accomplished career serving the public.

It is become a bit of a cliché to say that someone never forgot where they came from. Not only has Sarah never forgotten her roots, they are woven into every decision she makes and every job she has done.

She has worked all over the country, from Iowa to Massachusetts to Virginia to, of course, Ohio, which she adopted as her second home. Sarah has put working people at the center of all she does.

So many of the people who have worked with her in this office have shared stories about what makes her such an effective and admired leader and mentor.

She has a unique ability to quickly grasp and cut to the heart of any problem and to pull the right people together and empower them to solve it. She is not just a boss; she is truly a manager. She sees people's strengths and elevates them into the right roles to accomplish things as a team.

As a manager, she has always been there to help, but she also knows when the best way to help is to push you to meet your own potential.

It is easy to get caught up in the day to day stress of running an office or a campaign, and to lose track of actually managing staff. Sarah never does. She takes the time to invest in people, and the office serves Ohioans better for it.

A testament to that is how many of the people she has worked with who remain close personal friends.

Sarah brings a warmth and approachability to the office that could probably only come from both a Midwesterner and from someone who began her career as an organizer. Around the office, staff call her the People's Chief. You are just as likely to find her chatting in the front office with the staff