

Ryan and Reece coaching volleyball and enjoying some well-deserved time on the beach in Ocean City, MD. On behalf of the members and staff of the Select Committee on Ethics, I thank Danny for his decades of service and commitment to the U.S. Senate. I offer my sincere best wishes and gratitude to Danny and his family as he begins his retirement. Thank you, Danny.

TRIBUTE TO KYLE ABRAMS

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a long-time member of my staff Kyle Abrams, who has spent more than 4 years on my team during my time in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. Throughout her service, Kyle has been steadfast in her commitment to constituents across the State of California and been a truly dedicated public servant.

Prior to joining my office, Kyle served as an intern for Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND and the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and joined my House office as an intern in 2021. We immediately recognized her immense talent and asked her to take on the role of scheduler. Being a scheduler is no easy feat, and being a good scheduler requires patience, organization, and grace—all of which Kyle has in abundance. With her intelligence, personal skills, and strategic thinking, Kyle quickly took on the additional roles of director of scheduling, policy adviser, and most recently, senior adviser, all at a young age and in the midst of a campaign for Senate.

It has been a true pleasure to watch Kyle progress through her various roles on my staff, and to see her mentor junior staff. I am grateful for the responsibilities she took on during the transition from the House to Senate, ensuring that everything went smoothly, and that I could deliver for the people of California without interruption.

Kyle will be leaving my office to start her first year at Harvard Law School. She will be joining a tradition of excellence at my alma mater, and I am eager to see what she will accomplish far beyond the classroom.

In my almost 24 years in Congress, I have learned the important lesson that every member is only as good as their staff and seldom as good as that. We could not do our jobs for our constituents without them and their labors, and my staff have been laser focused on providing the highest level of service for the great people of southern California in the House and now the whole State of California in the Senate. Kyle is no exception; I extend my utmost gratitude for the time she has spent on my team, and I am looking forward to seeing all she will go on to achieve in this next chapter.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING MECKDEC DAY

• Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of MeckDec Day. On May 20, 1775, exactly 250 years ago, the citizens of Mecklenburg County took a bold and unprecedented step by adopting the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. This historic document, believed to be the first declaration of its kind, signaled the beginning of America's quest for independence from the oppressive rule of the British Crown. In the wake of the Battle of Concord, a committee of concerned citizens gathered and declared that Mecklenburg County's ties to Great Britain were hereby dissolved. Their courage laid the groundwork for the fight for liberty that would shape our Nation's future.

North Carolina honors this pivotal moment in our history by featuring the date of the Mecklenburg Declaration—May 20, 1775—prominently on our State flag, alongside another key milestone: April 12, 1776, the date of the Halifax Resolves. The Halifax Resolves, adopted by the North Carolina Provincial Congress, marked the first official action by an American Colony calling for independence from the British Crown. This bold resolution laid the groundwork for the presentation of the Declaration of Independence to the Continental Congress less than 3 months later, solidifying North Carolina's leadership in the fight for American liberty.

On May 22, 2025, the Charlotte Museum of History in Mecklenburg County, NC, will officially celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, issued in Charlotte, NC, on May 20, 1775, reads as follows:

Resolved—That whosoever directly or indirectly abets or in any way, form or manner, countenances the invasion of our rights, as attempted by the Parliament of Great Britain, is an enemy to his country, to America, and the rights of man.

Resolved—That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg County do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us with the mother county and absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British crown, abjuring all political connection with a nation that has wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties and inhumanly shed the innocent blood of Americans at Lexington.

Resolved—That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people, that we are and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing people under the power of God and the general Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

Resolved—That we do hereby ordain and adopt as rules of conduct all and each of our former laws, and the crown of Great Britain cannot be considered hereafter as holding any rights, privileges, or immunities amongst us.

Resolved—That all officers, both civil and military in this county, be entitled to exer-

cise the same powers and authorities as heretofore; that every member of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, and exercise the powers of a justice of the peace, issue process, hear and determine controversies according to law, preserve peace, union and harmony in the county, and use every exertion to spread the love of liberty and of country, until a more general and better organized system of government be established.

Resolved—That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted by express to the President of the Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, to be laid before that body.

Signers were: Abraham Alexander, Chairman, John McKnitt Alexander, Secretary, Ephraim Brevard, Hezekiah J. Balch, John Phifer, James Harris, William Kennon, John Foard, Richard Barry, Henry Downs, Ezra Alexander, William Graham, John Queary, Hezekiah Alexander, Adam Alexander, Charles Alexander, Zaccheus Wilson, Waightstill Avery, Benjamin Patton, Matthew McClure, Neill Morrison, Robert Erwin, John Flenniken, David Reese, John Davidson, Richard Harris, Thomas Polk, and Duncan Ochiltree.

I invite you to join me in commemorating the 250th anniversary of a defining moment in our Nation's path to independence. •

TRIBUTE TO LUPE WISSEL

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, with my colleagues Senator JIM RISCH and Representatives MIKE SIMPSON and RUSS FULCHER, I congratulate Lupe Wissel, of Eagle, ID, on her outstanding career of advocacy for senior citizens and veterans.

Lupe is retiring from serving most recently for nearly 10 years as State director of AARP, Idaho. Prior to joining AARP, Lupe dedicated more than 14 years to working for the U.S. Senate. This includes her service of more than 10 years as staff director for the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and her prior service as staff director for the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. A proud alum of Boise State University, she was also appointed by former Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne to serve as director for the Idaho Commission on Aging. And, previously, she devoted 21 years to serving as assistant regional manager/rehabilitation counselor III at the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In all, Lupe has spent more than four decades in public service, advocating for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Lupe has used her immense experience to inform her tireless, measured, and well-informed advocacy for seniors. She has provided trusted counsel to our congressional delegation as we have worked on issues of importance to Idaho seniors. She helped administer AARP-hosted tele-townhalls, ensuring Idahoans across our great State had opportunities to voice their views on issues before Congress. Throughout, she has been kind, efficient, professional, effective, and sincere to her cause.

Lupe's service to others stretches beyond her employment; she has also

supported efforts in her communities and Idaho through service in leadership positions for various organizations. This includes service on boards and commissions for the Pacific Region National Rehabilitation Association, Idaho Hispanic Commission, Idaho State Independent Living Council, Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce, Idaho Public Television, and Saint Alphonsus Health Systems.

When announcing the search for Lupe's replacement, AARP shared, "During her tenure with AARP, Wissel guided the Idaho staff and a deep cadre of volunteers—who are committed to helping the 50+ live their best lives and thrive as they age. Wissel has also been instrumental in AARP's expansion of resources for veterans through increased access to information and services, and educational programs. She also led the development and delivery of AARP's community programs, advocacy and information for its more than 187,000 members in Idaho."

As we honor Lupe for her remarkable work and wish her well in her next chapter, we also recognize she truly leaves big shoes to fill. Her leadership and impactful championing will be greatly missed, and we thank her for her strong backing of Idaho seniors and our country's veterans as she has shaped sound policy for Americans throughout her commendable career. ●

RECOGNIZING THE QUILTED FOREST

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair 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 Quilted Forest of Forest City, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 1998, Shelley and Dan Robson opened The Quilted Forest in Forest City, IA, to create a one-stop shop for quilting kits, fabrics, and original pattern designs. In 2004, Shelley launched Pieced Tree Patterns, a pattern design company that now sells custom quilt patterns nationwide. By 2009, the Robsons expanded into an 8,000-square-foot store on Forest City's Main Street. The Quilted Forest has a variety of products online and in store, with thousands of different fabric and pattern designs, as well as gifts and quilt kits. A dedicated team of four community-based employees supports the shop's daily operations, website design, and inventory management.

As the business grew on Main Street, so did its digital presence. In 2012, Quilt Sampler magazine named The Quilted Forest as one of the top 10 quilt shops in the United States. Furthermore, on July 4, 2021, Shelley had the idea to start a YouTube channel to share her passion with more people while connecting with other small businesses. In less than 2 years, a

project gained viral attention, propelling the channel's rapid growth. Today, The Quilted Forest YouTube channel has over 120,000 subscribers from around the world. Shelley's videos feature tutorials, museum tours, and project ideas for new and experienced quilters. One project Shelley has worked on is a State quilt block of the month to celebrate the United States' 250th birthday in 2026.

The Quilted Forest is very active in the Forest City community. The business is a member of the Forest City Chamber of Commerce, and Shelley formerly served a term as president on the chamber board. Through the chamber, the company participates in the community's Holiday Sip and Shop, a night to explore and shop Forest City's Main Street businesses. The Quilted Forest also participates in the All Iowa Shop Hop, a statewide event where participants collect passport stamps by visiting different stores across the State to win prizes, discover new items, and purchase unique fabrics. Beyond its retail presence, The Quilted Forest gives back by donating quilts to new mothers at the Mason City Hospital, as well as supporting fundraisers and local organizations across northern Iowa and southern Minnesota. In March, The Quilted Forest celebrated its 28th anniversary.

I want to congratulate the Robsons and the entire team at The Quilted Forest for their dedication to creativity to share their love of quilting with the Forest City community and beyond. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success. ●

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE GARRISON

● Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Mr. George Garrison of Joplin, MO, for his storied career of public service and for his 95th birthday.

Born on April 15, 1930, in Joplin, MO, George attended Joplin High School, where he played baseball and football. His passion and talent led him to play class D professional baseball, and while he had signed a contract to play Triple-A professional baseball—fulfilling a dream—he was actually drafted by the U.S. Army in January 1952. Shortly after being drafted, George married his high school sweetheart Barbara on February 1, 1952.

Like many young men his age, George was deployed to Korea. He served with the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division, 47th Field Artillery Battalion, where he drove the battalion commander to and from the frontlines. After 20 months of brave service to our country, including his deployment, George retired as a corporal in the U.S. Army and returned home to his beloved wife in Missouri.

After his military career, George went back to school and finished his degree in education. He became a public school teacher and coach in Raymore, MO; where he taught industrial arts, history, physical education,

and coached basketball and track. Having played sports himself, he was dedicated to the betterment of his students and the character building that comes through sports.

Following his tenure in Raymore, George and Barbara moved back to Joplin where George taught at Webb City High School. Both the ninth grade basketball and football teams he coached in 1957 led undefeated seasons. George then went on to become an assistant principal at Webb City Junior High School, and the couple moved to Webb City. Given his years of teaching and coaching for the Webb City School District and his proven leadership skills, in 1967, George was tapped as assistant superintendent. After 27 years of service in public education, George retired in 1984.

In addition to his decades of work with students and parents, George served as chairman of the Webb City Park Board, where he led the city in purchasing the land for the city's well-known King Jack Park, where he has since watched his grandkids play baseball and softball.

Whether in Joplin or Webb City, George has faithfully served his church—first as a charter member at Fellowship Bible Church in Joplin, where he helped in the youth group, and then as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, member of the choir, and of course, the softball coach, at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Webb City.

George has been happily married for 73 years and enjoys spending time with his three daughters, who all reside in Webb City, MO; his seven grandchildren; and his three great-grandchildren, with two more on the way. I thank George for his military service, his work in the Missouri public school system, and I wish George all the best upon reaching this impressive milestone of 95 years. ●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:18 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. 217. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the pilot program authorized by the Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1147. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1263. An act to require a strategy for bolstering engagement and cooperation between the United States, Australia, India, and Japan and to seek to establish a Quad Inter-Parliamentary Working Group to facilitate closer cooperation on shared interests and values.

H.R. 1286. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center for an assessment of forms that the Secretary sends to claimants