

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CASTRO

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize George Castro, who is retiring from the Senate after nearly 40 years on Capitol Hill—a truly incredible contribution to this institution. George first started with the Architect of the Capitol in January of 1985 and has been faithfully contributing to the Senate ever since.

Nowhere is this more true than on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where George has worked since November of 2003, almost 22 years ago. George's immense love for the work of the committee shone through in everything he did. Behind every successful committee hearing, markup, and event, there was George. He kept things running seamlessly, focusing on the details that were easy to forget, but certain to be noticed if missed. He did these things with a genuine and intentional kindness that is often in short supply, amassing a remarkable community of friends and colleagues along the way. Too cold in the hearing room? Emergency ice order for a retirement party? Incorrect name plate at a hearing? George could take care of it. He could count on his network to go out of their way to help him because he has spent a career going out of his way to help them. Staff can attest that when walking down the halls with George, he is often greeted by name from those who pass by—Senators, staff from across the Senate, the nurses from the health center, the sound engineers at the Senate Recording Studio, Capitol Police Officers—I could go on.

My staff and I were lucky enough to have George's steady hand to help show us the ropes when I took over as chair of the committee in 2023, and I know the other chairs he worked for must have felt the same. That includes eight other committee chairs in addition to myself, Republicans and Democrats: Senators Stevens, Cochran, Byrd, Inouye, Mikulski, Shelby, Leahy, and COLLINS.

In addition to his many other contributions, George has been known to regale committee staff with stories and lessons from some of the Senate's most pivotal moments in recent decades. He is also well known among his friends and colleagues for his love of travel and history and excellent taste in books, film, and the fine and performing arts. We will miss his many excellent recommendations along with his steady presence and positive attitude.

On behalf of all of the past Senate Appropriations Committee members, my colleagues, and staff who were lucky enough to work with George, I want to thank him for his immense contributions to the Appropriations Committee and the Senate. He will be greatly missed, but we wish him all the best for the adventures ahead.

TRIBUTE TO SEAN MOORE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a remarkable U.S. Sen-

ate staffer Sean Moore for his 30 years of dedicated public service in the U.S. Congress. Sean's path to public service started early in childhood. His father was a longtime staffer at the National Security Agency, and Sean always knew he wanted to follow in his footsteps and dedicate his life to serving the greater good. He wasted no time embarking on his career in public service: immediately after graduating from the University of Delaware with B.A.s in international relations and history, Sean arrived in the Senate, beginning as a legislative correspondent for then-U.S. Senator Joe Biden of Delaware on May 30, 1995.

In 1997, he joined the office of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer of California, where he worked for 17 years until her retirement in 2016. He was a trusted and invaluable adviser, rising through the ranks all the way from legislative aide to chief of staff. Sean also served as Senator Boxer's legislative director and led her foreign policy team for many years, including during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Though his humility prevents him from admitting so, he was key to some of her incredibly impactful work, including her 2008 efforts to secure visas for Vietnamese adoptees; her advocacy to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, or CEDAW; her work on the Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act of 2005; and notably, her landmark vote against declaring war on Iraq in 2002.

After Senator Boxer's retirement in 2016, Sean came to the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, where he became staff director under then-Ranking Member JEANNE SHAHEEN. Nine years later, he continues to serve in this role today, having served under three different Democratic leaders of the committee.

Sean embodies what a Senate staffer should be, mastering complex policy, grasping complicated political dynamics, giving studious attention to every detail, understanding the intricacies of the institution, and always working to advance the priorities of the committee and its membership. Sean anticipates every situation and is ready with politically astute and intellectually sound advice on how to approach any challenge.

This was never more apparent than in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and America's small businesses faced an existential threat unlike anything seen before. Under then-Senator Cardin's leadership, the committee led the effort to save small businesses by creating programs like the Paycheck Protection Program, Restaurant Revitalization Fund, Shuttered Venue Operators Grant Program, and other critical relief efforts. Sean rolled up his sleeves and worked tirelessly to help create, enact, and implement multiple bipartisan relief programs. Ultimately, these programs provided over a trillion

dollars to small businesses and helped keep them and the American economy afloat. A staffer to the core, he will never accept credit or recognition for any of his work, but he was truly a key part of our country's monumental response to a once-in-a-lifetime crisis. He not only was a witness to history but played a critical role in it.

Not only is Sean an excellent adviser and staffer, but he is also an exceptional leader. He empowers his staff, draws out their strengths and abilities, and never fails to uplift their work. He believes that part of his public service is mentoring and raising the next generation of staffers, and he takes this responsibility very seriously. He has a unique ability to identify hard-working, talented staffers who rise to the occasion regardless of their years of experience or degrees. This mentality has led him to build smart and effective teams for several U.S. Senators throughout his tenure.

As with many public servants, his career is made possible by the support of his family. The Moores are a force on Capitol Hill. Sean and his wife Shane Moore met while they both worked under then-Senator Boxer. Shane is also a longtime public servant who went on to serve former U.S. House Representative Loretta Sanchez of California for nearly two decades and continues to serve in the House of Representatives today. Sean and Shane raised two children McKenna and Ryan in Bethesda, MD, and together, they have built a life dedicated to serving the American public and this institution. Together, Sean and Shane helped this body navigate some of our country's most challenging moments, including 9/11, the Iraq War, the Great Recession, and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Careers like theirs do not come without sacrifice. Thirty years of service is as much a milestone for this remarkable family as it is for Sean.

I would like to share quotes from some of my colleagues for whom Sean has worked during his career. I believe his impact on Capitol Hill is best summarized by them:

U.S. Senator Boxer (retired): "Sean is the best of the best: wise, humble, respectful and committed to serving the people. Sean was able to take the toughest issue, break it down and lay out a clear plan to solve the problem, whether it was legislation, a hearing, a letter, a press conference or a simple phone call. He always knew the staff's strengths and weaknesses and put together the right team at the right time. He was always on top of everything which is what a true leader does. I still stay in touch with Sean because I still want to hear his perspective and his ideas. Congratulations on 30 years of outstanding work."

U.S. Senator SHAHEEN: "For thirty years, Sean Moore has been serving families in Delaware, California and, through the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, every state,

including New Hampshire. Like many of our best public servants, Sean may not be known by most folks in the country, but I can tell you that many families and small businesses certainly know his work. I worked closely with Sean as both Chair and Ranking Member of the committee and his work supporting small businesses through COVID, including with the Paycheck Protection Program, helped so many small businesses get through the pandemic. I know Sean isn't going anywhere right now and hope he continues to serve, but on behalf of the countless Granite State families and businesses that have and will continue to benefit from Sean's work, I join my colleagues in thanking Sean for his thirty years of public service."

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (retired): "Sean Moore is everything a senator needs and wants in a staff director—or any staff person. He is a consummate professional. He is an honest broker and a calming influence. He knows the Senate and the agencies with which he connects daily. He gets things done and doesn't worry about who gets credit—but he is always quick to uplift and spotlight the quality work of more junior staffers. I was blessed to have Sean as a resource and partner during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to his round-the-clock work and innovative thinking, we quickly created new programs like the Paycheck Protection Program to save jobs and keep small businesses afloat during the most challenging economic crisis in a generation. We saved nonprofits and live entertainment venues. We did all this on a scale never expected. Sean made this possible. The best thing I can say to describe Sean Moore and his 30-year tenure with the Senate is that he is a true public servant. He understands that our work is for the American people, and he fights daily to make people's lives better. I will forever be grateful to Sean for his dedication, kindness and service. He is a legend."

These quotes show the remarkable impact Sean has had and how his tireless work has left the country a better place. I want to thank Sean for his dedication to the institution and to serving the American people. Congratulations on 30 years of service and counting.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ANSON H. "TUCK" HINES

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant Dr. Anson H. "Tuck" Hines, director of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center SERC. Dr. Hines has served SERC for over 45 years, including as its director since 2005. He has dedicated himself to addressing our world's most pressing ecological challenges, championed conservation efforts, and inspired the next generation of scientists.

Dr. Hines' impact on SERC is remarkable. Under his leadership, SERC

has spearheaded groundbreaking research, grown its research footprint to four continents, and strengthened public engagement through citizen science programs. He also oversaw the restoration of the historic Woodlawn House as a public museum and education center and expanded SERC's landholdings in the Rhode River watershed by 1,100 acres. This growth protected critical habitats for research, conservation, and education.

As a marine ecologist and zoologist, Dr. Hines is an expert in his field. He has published over 150 articles in technical journals and books, contributing to our understanding of long-term ecological change in the Chesapeake Bay, aquaculture, fishery restoration, and countless additional areas of research. I would be remiss to not mention that he has been critical to the conservation efforts to restore my home State's famous blue crabs.

Dr. Hines' unwavering dedication to teaching and inspiring the next generation of scientists is truly admirable. He grew the capacity of SERC's housing capacity to accommodate additional interns and visiting scientists, strengthening the center's ability to attract top talent. As an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, Dr. Hines has motivated countless students. He has guided 20 postdoctoral fellows as a major adviser, supported countless Ph.D. and master of science students, and mentored more than 165 undergraduate interns.

I commend Dr. Hines for his dedication to our environment, his scientific expertise, and his commitment to fostering tomorrow's scientists. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him and wishing him a well-earned, enjoyable, and fulfilling retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING B&B GATES & SUPPLY

• 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 B&B Gates & Supply of Doon, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1996, Barry and Patty Pollema, hog and cattle farmers, started B&B Gates & Supply in an unheated shop on their family farm in Doon, IA. From the start, the couple had a vision for growing the business and providing jobs that support families across the community. B&B Gates & Supply began as a farm-side operation, providing community members with gates to protect all types of livestock, ranging from chickens to cattle.

Today, B&B Gates & Supply is a full-service United States manufacturer of livestock gates, specializing in custom hog and cattle gates and a wide range

of agricultural necessities. Due to its growth, in 2021, B&B Gates & Supply moved its operation into a 50,000-square-foot facility along highway 75 with more enclosed space and greater room to scale. That same year, the Pollemas added a retail supply store. The store offers various items such as hoses, batteries, and other farming necessities—helping customers save time by finding what they need all in one place. In addition, B&B Gates & Supply added a servicing arm to the business, enabling service technicians to visit farms and resolve a wide range of issues found by their clients. The family business now employs over 34 community members. Several of Barry and Patty's children have also taken on key roles. Their sons Jesse, Jacob, and Jason Pollema all work in the family business. Jesse serves as the cattle gates and equipment manager and is now a co-owner. Jacob and Jason work in sales. Their daughter Abby handles social media and marketing.

B&B Gates & Supply plays an active role in its local community, often stepping in to provide critical support when it is needed most. During last year's flood in Rock Valley, the team spent days helping with cleanup and support. In 2021, Lyon County named B&B Gates & Supply an Iowa Master Pork Partner for its service to the hog industry in Lyon and across Iowa. Additionally, in 2023, VAL-CO awarded B&B Gates & Supply with the Gold Dealer Award for sales. That same year, VAL-CO initiated a partnership with B&B Gates & Supply to provide a range of equipment suitable for use in hog or cattle houses. In 2024, VAL-CO opened a warehouse, which is managed by B&B Gates & Supply, to make hog equipment, feed storage and transport systems, and more for customers and dealerships throughout the Midwest. This year, B&B Gates & Supply will celebrate its 29th anniversary in Iowa.

I want to congratulate the Pollema family and the entire team at B&B Gates & Supply for their entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to providing high-quality American-manufactured products and agricultural services to workers and families across northwest Iowa. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING HUFFMAN'S FARM & HOME

• 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 Huffman's Farm & Home of Fort Madison, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 2002, Bob Huffman and his brothers Mike and Hank founded Huffman's Farm & Home after gaining experience at their father's successful business