

designating the month of June as “Life Month” to honor the dignity of every human life and to thank those who protect the most vulnerable. It is also a time to renew our national commitment to defending the unborn.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court made a historic advance in the cause of life. In *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*—a flawed decision that for nearly 50 years enshrined one of the most disturbing notions in our constitutional history; that the Constitution somehow protects the right to end the life of an unborn child. The fact is *Roe* had nothing to do with the Constitution. It was invented from whole cloth. It was the product of judicial activism—nine Justices legislating from the Bench—and that dangerous path took decades to correct. Thankfully, in 2022, *Roe* was overturned.

Dobbs did not impose any new policies from the Bench. Instead, the task of protecting life falls where it always should have been, not in the hands of unelected judges but in the hands of the American people. We the people now bear the duty, not just a legal duty but a moral duty, to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. I am reminded of how important this fight is every January when thousands gather in Washington, DC, for the March for Life. People from across the Nation come together and walk miles and miles and meet with endless offices and organizations on Capitol Hill to march for the unborn and the protection of life. They remind us that this is a movement of conviction, of compassion, and of courage.

Walk into any pregnancy resource center in the country, and you will see these values in action: volunteers counseling scared young mothers, shelves stocked with diapers and baby clothes and supplies, medical care offered without a dime of government funding. You will find pastors and priests comforting families, foster parents opening their homes, and women who have walked through the pain of abortion using their voices to offer hope and healing.

Life is not an accident, and it is not a coincidence. It is a joy and a blessing from God. Life is the foundation of every other right we hold dear. Without it, there can be no liberty, no prosperity, no pursuit of happiness. That is why defending the right to life is a serious responsibility.

Designating June as “Life Month” is our way of saying that a just society is measured by how it treats the most vulnerable among us. Let June be the month when we recommit to the American ideal that every single life has dignity—every little boy, every little girl; that there is no person who is beneath the law’s protection; that we are a nation not of death but of life—a nation that chooses life—and that is a cause to celebrate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 264

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, the U.S. Navy has developed many traditions over its centuries of existence. Among them is the method of naming its ships. Most, though not all, aircraft carriers are named after U.S. Presidents—the USS *Truman*, the *Eisenhower*, the *Ford*. Nuclear submarines are named after States—the VA class and the Ohio class, for example.

The Navy is now partway through building its newest class of fleet replenishment oilers. These are the ships that resupply fuel to the rest of the Navy fleet and the aircraft operating aboard those ships. These are the John Lewis class.

I am immensely proud to have been a colleague of Congressman John Lewis’s in the House of Representatives, where I served alongside him from 2000 until his passing in 2020. I was lucky enough, through our shared service, to consider him a friend. He was just a wonderful, genuine, heroic, brave, courageous, and upbeat individual. I never saw John Lewis have a bad day, never saw him anything other than optimistic about the future of our country.

I have another source of pride. The State of California, home to General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, NASSCO, is where the oilers are being built. The ships in this class are, in addition to the *John Lewis*, named after California Governor and Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, and Navy lieutenant Harvey Milk, the San Francisco gay rights pioneer. Four more ships are under construction: the USNS *Lucy Stone*, *Sojourner Truth*, *Thurgood Marshall*, and *Ruth Bader Ginsburg*. The *Harriet Tubman* and *Dolores Huerta* are under contract. The Navy reports that the next two ships in the class will be named after Joshua Goldberg and Thomas Parham.

The Navy has seen fit to honor these civil rights icons who spent their lives fighting for the rights of the American people by naming ships in their honor. We learned this week, however, that the Secretary of Defense does not share the view that these leaders are worthy of the honor of recognition that the Navy has bestowed upon them.

According to a statement from a spokesman, it is better to name defense installations and assets that are more aligned with “the warrior ethos”—whatever they mean by that.

The Secretary of Defense, who testified at his confirmation hearing that today constitutes “the most dangerous moment we have been in since the end of the Cold War, and possibly since World War II”—that Secretary of Defense is spending his time ordering Department officials to remove the name of Harvey Milk from the second oiler in the John Lewis class of ships. Other ships may be similarly renamed.

Harvey Milk joined the Navy as a diver after graduating from college and saw action in the Korean war while

serving on a rescue submarine from 1952 until 1954. He was forced to resign with an other than honorable discharge rather than being court-martialed for being gay.

In 1977, he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors as the first openly gay official in the country. On November 27, 1978, Milk was tragically shot by a fellow supervisor, Dan White.

As many Senators know, our former colleague Dianne Feinstein, in whose seat I am now deeply honored to serve, was the first to find Harvey Milk’s body after he had been shot to death and to whom the job of holding San Francisco together then fell.

Dianne Feinstein was a cosponsor of the USNS *Harvey Milk*, with her name welded into the hull. One wonders if the Secretary of Defense will try to remove that as well.

I suspect it is no coincidence that the Pentagon released the news of the renaming of the USNS *Harvey Milk* at the beginning of Pride Month and while Washington, DC, hosts World Pride. You can draw a straight line between the Department of Defense in this administration removing Jackie Robinson from its official site and its terminating the first woman to lead the military services and a well-respected African-American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all without cause.

I don’t understand how these removals promote the “warrior ethos.” I don’t understand how it promotes the “warrior ethos” to rename the military installation Fort Bragg, using the fig leaf that it is now named for a different person of that name than the Confederate general for whom it is really connected. Engaging in such duplicitous word games seems more weak than warrior.

The U.S. Senate should not stand by silently while U.S. civil rights icons—from John Lewis to Cesar Chaves, to Dolores Huerta, to Harriet Tubman—are erased from the Navy just as the Pentagon has erased so many other figures from American history on its websites.

And so, today, I offer a simple resolution with my California colleague ALEX PADILLA. It says that the Senate believes it is important and worthwhile to honor civil rights leaders by naming ships after them and expresses the Senate’s view that the Department of Defense should not seek to remove these names.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 264, submitted earlier today; that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the naming of

naval ships is a long and proud naval tradition that goes back to America's first frigates commissioned by Congress. Then, as now, the naming of a ship is not just a top-down affair. It demands the input and consideration of the journey men and women who constructed her, as well as her prospective crew and captain, right down to the lowest ranking sailor.

Those individuals are known in naval tradition as plank owners, and that title brings with it an honor that they were the first to sail aboard a ship that will serve our country for generations. That is an honor that transcends political partisanship and differences of opinion, and it belongs to the sailors.

It is no secret that the last administration took a top-down approach to the naming of our newest class of USNS oilers. In doing so, they broke with important naval customs and traditions and robbed the USNS plank owners of the chance to name these vessels after what mattered most to them.

It is true that civilian leaders in Congress and the White House have always had a say in ship naming as well. George Washington selected the names of our first six frigates, but he did so from a list provided by the plank owners—the ships' crews and captains.

Navy tradition, like the name of a ship, lives in the hearts and minds of every sailor, and these traditions are vital to preserving the morale and fighting spirit of our forces. Resetting the stage is not a political issue. It is bringing things back in line with naval custom and tradition. It will allow the Secretary of the Navy to consider the input of new ship plank owners so that he can name this class of ships after the things that matter most to America's sailors.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague.

Past Presidents and Secretaries of the Navy have named these ships. They have named them after civil rights leaders: John Lewis, Thurgood Marshall.

Joshua Goldberg, who lived from 1896 to 1994, was drafted into the Russian Army in World War I, emigrated to the United States, and became the first Jewish rabbi to volunteer for naval service in World War II, rising to the rank of captain.

Thomas Parham, who lived from 1920 to 2007, was ordained in 1944 and served in shore assignments during World War II and then returned to Active Duty as a chaplain during the Korean war, serving in Japan, and becoming the Navy's first African-American sailor promoted to captain.

These are inspiring people. Honoring them by naming ships after them tells young people that the United States welcomes them—all of them.

Naming ships may fall to the executive branch, but I think Congress, with

its constitutional duty to raise armies and navies, has an important role to play.

All this resolution does is express approval of the existing names. It does not force the Navy to keep them. But it says that the individuals that have been named are worthy of that honor and distinction, and I would urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I wanted to just give a quick update on a project I was working on last week to my fellow Senators.

I spent the last week, during Memorial Day week, in the Middle East. ANGUS KING and I actually traveled to Baghdad, Erbil, Beirut, and Oman. And then Angus left out for Türkiye, and I left out for Jerusalem.

It is exceptionally helpful to be able to walk through the different countries of the region right now. Obviously, there is a tremendous amount of instability around Syria. We had the opportunity to be able to ask leaders in every single one of those countries about the future of Syria and the options that are there and what could happen.

It is to America's best interest to be able to have a stable Middle East and a functioning relationship in all of those countries.

Just a quick walk-through of a couple things that I think are important there: In Baghdad, they are actively working to be able to reach out to American companies. There is a real interest there and, quite frankly, a growth in Baghdad's economy, in Iraq's economy. They are trying to be able to stabilize, though they are still very close to Iran and to Tehran.

As chilling as it is, when I went in to meet with the Prime Minister, you can't go to the Prime Minister's office without going through the large traffic circle right outside his office, where he has a giant depiction of the martyr Soleimani in front of his office. That is the Iranian head of the IRGC that actively worked to kill as many Americans as possible. It was a reminder that there are still challenges in this region, while they are still welcoming to American businesses.

In Erbil, in the Kurdish Regional Government, they truly love America, and there is a true Western feel when you get to Erbil. They are open for commerce. They are open for capitalism.

They are still a part of Iraq, but they are very interested in turning their attention toward the Western world and toward engaging in a great deal of American business. In fact, one of the most prideful moments of the conversation were on the American businesses that are coming through and engaging in the Kurdish Regional Government, in that area. To be able to see—I counted 15 cranes across Erbil,

with the construction that is happening there. It is remarkable to be able to see the investment that is coming into that area.

It is good for us to continue to be able to maintain relationships with that region, and they are grateful to be able to be a partner to the United States. But even they are saying to their Kurdish friends that are over on the eastern side of Syria that they should turn their attention toward Damascus in forming a unified Syrian Government.

In the broad diversity that is Syria, with Kurds, with Turks, with Alawites, with Sunnis, with Shias, with Christians that are all in Syria in multiple areas and then in the broad swath of the desert area in the south, to still see a stronghold for ISIS that remains in Syria—it was a reminder again of the challenges this new Syrian Government has.

It was interesting as well to me that every single one of the leaders that I met in the area all raised to me their gratitude for President Trump canceling the sanctions on Syria. They all said: We don't know exactly which way the Syrian Government is going to go. It is too early to be able to tell.

But American sanctions would have prevented them from ever being successful in the future. So they expressed their gratitude over and over again to the United States for giving Syria a shot to be able to form its own country and its own nation.

When we landed in Beirut, we landed on a Sunday. It was the Sunday before Memorial Day Monday. It was a sober reminder to wake up in Beirut at the Embassy compound and to just walk that half block from where I was staying there over to the memorial that is on the Embassy compound for the many, many lives that have been lost over the years in Beirut, including the 241 marines that died in the marine barracks in 1983. To be there on that ground on Memorial Day was sobering to say the least.

But I have to tell you, I have been to Lebanon multiple times. I have met with the Lebanese leaders multiple times and with the Lebanese Armed Forces. I have never left Lebanon more optimistic than when I left Lebanon, when I took off. The new leadership there—President Aoun, the new Prime Minister there—is focused on fixing the banking system in Lebanon, fixing the port, repairing the airport, and getting a new economic infrastructure in place.

They said over and over again: We are not looking for assistance coming to us; we are looking for investors to be able to be here. We want to be open for business and have people from all over the world to be able to come here to be able to do business, so we are going to get our systems right and get rid of corruption.

They also said something that was a pretty remarkable statement. They said they want to have a monopoly on military weapons. Now, that may not