

been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 378, motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 58, William Briggs, of Texas, to be Deputy Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 416, motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 91, Arielle Roth, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

HONORING DEPUTY BRANDON GAEDE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the memory and mourn the tragic passing of a young Kansan, Phillips County Sheriff's Deputy Brandon Gaede.

On Friday, June 27, Kansas lost one of its finest in the line of duty. Responding to a call in Phillipsburg, Deputy Brandon Gaede arrived promptly at the scene, and as he was attempting to make an arrest, the suspect revealed a concealed handgun and opened fire. Despite being struck several times, Brandon returned fire, neutralizing the assailant in order to protect innocent bystanders and prevent any further harm to his fellow officers. First responders and EMS quickly arrived at the scene to perform lifesaving efforts, but sadly, Brandon did not survive.

I am heartbroken by this tragedy. Words cannot describe the devastating loss felt by Brandon's family, friends, and loved ones. Brandon is survived by his wife Karlye and their three young children. This senseless act of violence has forever robbed the Gaede family of their father and husband and the Phillips County community of a dedicated public servant.

When we lose someone in a Kansas community, it is not simply just another name. It is someone we have seen at our children's school activities, stood beside at community gatherings, and gotten to know as a neighbor and friend.

Brandon's life was an example of what it means to truly serve, and I have come to learn there are many examples of Brandon's selflessness. I attended Brandon's funeral in Phillipsburg. The outpouring of love and support I saw for Brandon was incredible. Over 100 law enforcement agencies traveled to northwest Kansas to show their support for their brother in blue.

In addition to this support, law enforcement has a tradition of escorting a fallen officer to their place of rest, and as the motorcade was headed from Wichita to Phillipsburg, it passed through my hometown of Plainville. The videos I saw showed hundreds of first responders and community members lining the streets, waving American flags and saluting a fallen hero. This moment serves as a reminder to all of us that we more in common than we have apart.

Our men and women of law enforcement, officers like Brandon, put their lives on the line every day in dedication to serving their community. They selflessly stand between those they have sworn to protect and those that wish to do them harm, sacrificing much for the sake of their families, friends, and communities. While we can never repay the sacrifice of Brandon, we have a responsibility to honor his memory and make certain his sacrifice is never forgotten.

To Brandon's family, friends and loved ones: I am sorry for your loss. May God comfort you during your time of grief and be a source of strength during this difficult time.

Brandon served his community with integrity, honor, and respect. May we never forget his memory and his service, and may we each strive to live up to the values he swore to protect.

REMEMBERING LINO GUTIERREZ

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the remarkable life and career of Ambassador Lino Gutierrez, a dedicated public servant whose decades of diplomacy helped shape U.S. engagement across the Western Hemisphere. He passed away on May 3, 2025, leaving behind a legacy defined by service and impact.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Ambassador Gutierrez came to the United States as a young boy, fleeing Castro's regime and beginning a journey that would see him rise to some of the highest ranks of American diplomacy. Gutierrez served in the Foreign Service under five Presidents and 11 Secretaries of State, including as U.S. Ambassador to both Nicaragua and Argentina.

In those roles, Ambassador Gutierrez led and oversaw a number of significant achievements. During his tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Argentina, the United States and Argentina signed agreements on counterterrorism and counternarcotics cooperation and container security. As Acting Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Gutierrez led the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs on September 11, 2001, and beyond. He accompanied Secretary of State Colin Powell to Lima, Peru, for the signing of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and returned with the Secretary's party to the United States on September 11, 2001. During his tenure in Nicaragua, Gutierrez oversaw efforts to demobilize and reintegrate the Contra fighters into civil society, strengthen the country's newly established democratic government after years of authoritarian rule, and coordinated the U.S. relief effort following the deadly devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

After retiring from the State Department, Ambassador Gutierrez remained deeply committed to strengthening the Foreign Service. As executive director of the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, he championed initiatives to enhance recruitment, professional development,

and public understanding of diplomacy. He also taught as an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins and George Washington Universities, served on the board of Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, was appointed by Secretary of State John Kerry to the Foreign Service Grievance Board, and provided expert guidance to DACOR on fostering strong U.S.-Latin America relations. Through these endeavors, Ambassador Gutierrez leaves behind a remarkable legacy which will continue to shape the next generation of U.S. diplomatic and foreign policy leaders.

Ambassador Gutierrez embodied the American ideal of public service. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife Miriam, their three daughters, and six grandchildren. May his example continue to inspire all who believe in diplomacy as a force for peace, security, and opportunity.

TRIBUTE TO DR. FREDRICK "SKIP" BURKLE

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Dr. Fredrick "Skip" Burkle, Jr., is a distinguished veteran, physician, and humanitarian whose service to our Nation exemplifies the highest ideals of courage and compassion. Throughout his career, Dr. Burkle has selflessly dedicated his life to graciously serve not only the American people, but countless others who his influence and expertise extended to.

Dr. Burkle was drafted into the U.S. Navy at the height of the Vietnam war as a military physician at Delta Med, a Forward Casualty Receiving Facility for the 3rd Marine Division near the Demilitarized Zone. Under relentless mortar fire and nightly combat, Dr. Burkle provided lifesaving care to wounded marines, civilians, and enemy combatants alike. While serving at Delta Med, Dr. Burkle came under an incoming enemy attack which caused him to collide into the wall of a bunker, resulting in a traumatic brain injury. However, Dr. Burkle did not let this injury stop him from continuing his career of service.

His valor and dedication earned him the Bronze Star with Combat V, a testament to his extraordinary service in an extremely dangerous engagement of the war. In 1975, Dr. Burkle returned to Vietnam to serve as the medical director for Operation Babylift, a daring humanitarian mission that evacuated thousands of orphans from Saigon in the final days of the war. His leadership during this operation saved countless lives and demonstrated the enduring commitment of American compassion in times of crisis. During the Persian Gulf War, Dr. Burkle served as senior medical officer at Al Khanjar Navy-Marine Trauma Center, one of the largest field hospitals in the Marine Corps' history.

Dr. Burkle retired as a captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve, but his commitment to public service did not end there. He went on to become one of the

world's experts in disaster response, global health, and humanitarian assistance. Dr. Burkle further offered his expertise in disaster and emergency medicine by serving as the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Global Health at the U.S. Agency for International Development, where he was notably tasked to organize preparations for postconflict humanitarian assistance following the U.S. invasion of Iraq. His work has spanned continents and crises, earning him well-deserved recognition.

Dr. Burkle's life is a testament to the values we hold dear: service above self, healing in the face of destruction, and unwavering dedication to the betterment of humankind. I commend Dr. Burkle for his service to this country; we are a nation forever in gratitude for his accomplishments. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. Fredrick "Skip" Burkle for his military service, his humanitarian legacy, and his enduring impact on global health and diplomacy.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING SPONHEIM SALES AND SERVICES

• 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 Sponheim Sales and Services of Nora Springs, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 2015 by Dean Sponheim, a fourth-generation Mitchell County farmer, Sponheim Sales and Services is the culmination of decades of agricultural innovation and a deep commitment to soil health and sustainability. Dean, along with his son Josh and longtime colleague Rachel Amundson, launched the acclaimed one-stop shop to provide cover crop seed, aerial application, custom seeding services, and more. What began as an effort to improve farming practices beyond conservation evolved into a full-service operation supporting farmers across Iowa.

Dean's journey began in the late 1990s, when he started strip-tilling and providing custom strip-till services. By 2012, Dean was aerially applying cover crops. With the official establishment of Sponheim Sales and Services a few years later, the team expanded to offer cover crop seed sales, custom seed cleaning, drilling, interseeding, and contracting with local oat and rye growers. Recently, they have partnered with Continuum Ag to help farmers participate in sustainability-driven markets while reducing their environmental footprint.

Today, Sponheim Sales and Services continues to operate out of Nora Springs, IA, serving farmers across the

region, while carrying forward the family's Century Farm legacy. The business remains highly involved within the community, actively participating with organizations such as the Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association, and Iowa Farm Bureau Federation. Dean also serves on the Rock Creek Watershed Advisory Board and contributes to national conservation efforts through the National Strip-Till Conference. In 2014, Dean was recognized with the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award, a testament to his commitment and ongoing pursuit of sustainable farming. In addition to these leadership roles, Sponheim Sales and Services is dedicated to supporting its local community, sponsoring many schools and county fairs. The team is a trusted resource for farmers seeking professional guidance, offering skills and knowledge drawn from years of firsthand experience and continuous learning.

Last year, I witnessed the entrepreneurial spirit and dedication to land stewardship demonstrated by Sponheim Sales and Services firsthand. As a trusted partner to local farmers and a leader in conservation agriculture, this family-owned business continues to make a positive impact across our State and region. I want to congratulate Dean, Josh, Rachel, and the entire Sponheim Sales and Services team for their outstanding work, and I look forward to their continued success supporting Iowa's agricultural future.●

RECOGNIZING PRESTON, IDAHO

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, today, I rise with my colleagues Senator MIKE CRAPO and Congressman MIKE SIMPSON to celebrate the 125th birthday of Preston, ID. From the famous Preston Night Rodeo to the historic brick-and-mortar businesses along State Street, Preston has both a deep history and bright future to be celebrated.

The first settlers arrived in the Preston area in 1888, establishing a small agricultural town in the fertile Cache Valley of southeastern Idaho, which they called "Worm Creek." The community, shaped by faith, family, hard work, and resilience, was officially incorporated on July 25, 1900. The newly formed city was named Preston in honor of William B. Preston, the fourth Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Preston quickly became known for its strong agricultural foundation, primarily in dairy, sugar beet, and grain farming, which still influence the economy today. In 1904, the Oregon Short Line Railroad connected Preston to larger nearby markets, spurring growth in commerce, education, and the community in Franklin County. Preston High School was built shortly thereafter, in 1908. In the more than 100 years since, the school has gained recognition not only for its academic achievements but also for the 2004 pop culture sensation "Napoleon Dyna-

mite." This iconic film captured the sincerity and quiet charm that Preston has displayed since its founding.

The city of Preston is a true testament to Western American heritage. These values are evident in the kindness of the community, rich agricultural roots, and the Famous Preston Night Rodeo. Since 1934, the award-winning Preston Rodeo has attracted world-champion cowboys and cowgirls, stimulated economic development, and inspired generations of family fun.

For 125 years, Preston has demonstrated that hard work, responsible stewardship of the land, and commitment to community create a lasting impact. Today, we proudly recognize more than a century of this small town's strong families, agricultural innovations, and notable small businesses that will continue to shape its future.●

RECOGNIZING THOMAS MERCANTILE

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. Today, I am pleased to honor Thomas Mercantile as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for July 2025.

Thomas Mercantile opened in Swan Lake in 1909 when Samuel Thomas bought the store. Alongside his brothers Chauncey and Moroni, the family operated the local post office, grocery store, and a harness and saddle business.

During its 108 years of operation, the Thomas Mercantile was known as the "hub" of the Swan Lake community. From its early days as a dancehall and barbershop to becoming home to the first television in east Idaho, the shop was a favorite spot for town meetings and camaraderie. Three generations of Thomases ran the business, overcoming the Great Depression, World War II, tragedy, and triumph, before closing the mercantile in 2017.

In the spring of 2021, Idaho native Kaarin Engelmann took on the challenge of reopening the store. After a lengthy restoration process, during which Kaarin worked extensively to preserve the business's history, charm, and beloved radiators, the Thomas Mercantile reopened its doors in May of 2023.

Today, Kaarin continues the legacy of the Thomas Mercantile by hosting community events, such as board gaming afternoons, Music at the Merc, and Swan Lake Market Day. The shop also supports local producers, sourcing its baked goods, eggs, pork, and beef from vendors in the Swan Lake region.

Congratulations to Kaarin, the Thomas family, and all the employees at Thomas Mercantile on being selected as the Idaho Small Business of