

progress must be sustained as it was built, by American leadership. And our leadership must be sustained if our interests are to be protected around the world. Do not doubt: those interests are not geopolitical abstractions, they are real.”

I was reminded of that during a visit to Kosovo a few years ago. While standing at Secretary Albright’s statue, an older man approached to thank us for her leadership and for the U.S. role in ending the war there. It was a clear reminder that when the United States stands with people fighting for basic rights, it makes a difference.

On this Human Rights Day, we should take that lesson seriously. Supporting democracies and independent civic groups makes America safer. That takes U.S. leadership. So I urge my colleagues to back steady funding, credible election observation, and the resolve to call out abuses when they occur.

TRIBUTE TO ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the leadership of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, spiritual head of more than 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. As the 269th direct successor to the Apostle Andrew and the 270th Ecumenical Patriarch, he represents a centuries-old tradition of faith, service, and moral guidance that has shaped communities around the globe.

His All-Holiness recently visited the United States, where he continued a tradition of engagement with U.S. leaders. While in Washington, DC, he participated in meetings with bipartisan congressional leaders in the U.S. Capitol, reinforcing the long-standing friendship between our country and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

While in the United States, His All-Holiness was honored with the Templeton Prize, joining a select group of global figures recognized for their spiritual vision and commitment to faith and leadership. His presence in our country highlighted both the continuity of Orthodox Christianity and the enduring need for moral and spiritual leadership in the modern world.

TRIBUTE TO COMMISSIONER GEORGE COPADIS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize George Copadis for his decades of public service and advocacy for Granite Staters. George has been a giant in New Hampshire’s State government for an impressive 21 years, and he has been a magnetic local leader in the city of Manchester for even longer. He leaves a legacy of steady management, consensus-building, and genuine care for his neighbors and constituents.

George has firm roots in New Hampshire. He was born and raised in Man-

chester, attended college at the University of New Hampshire, and remains a lifelong resident of the Granite State. In 2004, George stepped away from a successful career to accept an appointment as the commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Labor by Governor Craig Benson. He oversaw a State agency that ensured compliance with New Hampshire’s labor laws and encouraged workplaces to respect the dignity and interests of their employees. George served in this position for 8 years under two Governors of two different political parties.

In July of 2012, George became the interim commissioner of New Hampshire Employment Security. Governor John Lynch remarked that George’s dependable leadership would bring “a calming effect,” and his initial 6-month appointment has blossomed into 13 years as commissioner of an important State agency for job-seekers and employers. Individuals seeking unemployment compensation, career-related services, and labor market information look to New Hampshire Employment Security, often in times of great need. George and his team work diligently and swiftly to connect these people to helpful resources.

As commissioner of New Hampshire Employment Security, George served under four Governors from both political parties. His tenure is marked by stability and fulfillment of the agency’s critical mission, yet it was not without its challenges. George describes the COVID-19 pandemic as the most demanding stretch of his career. Working 7 days a week around the clock, George and his team managed the awarding of unemployment benefits that—at the height of the public health emergency—exceeded \$2 billion to 175,000 individuals. Their efforts provided hope in a time of great uncertainty for many Granite State families.

In addition to his service in State government, George is well known throughout New Hampshire for his involvement with several nonprofits and local groups. He has given his time as a board member of the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority for 33 years, and he has also volunteered for many United Way Charitable Campaigns. Most notably, George is famous for his connection to St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in his hometown of Manchester. He has served on its board for 39 years and can always be found at its community events, especially the church’s popular annual GLENDI Festival. Ever proud of his Greek heritage, George has a reputation for bringing baklava to big meetings and gatherings.

I have known George for decades. As a policymaker, I have always welcomed his perspective and advice on ways we can strengthen New Hampshire’s economy and provide employers with the workforce they need to grow and thrive. But more importantly, I am proud to call him a friend.

George’s decades of public service and community involvement were celebrated this past month, and friends, family, and colleagues have joined together to reflect on his many achievements. Having spent most of his life as a local leader in his beloved hometown, George will undoubtedly continue to serve his friends and neighbors with care and compassion in meaningful ways. I join them in spirit for this celebration of George, and I once again thank him for all he has done for our Granite State.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND BYEONG CHEOL HAN

• Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate and honor Rev. Byeong Cheol Han for concluding years of ministry, service, and leadership to the people of Georgia at the Korean Central Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, where he served as senior pastor for the last 16 years.

Reverend Han’s journey in ministry began when he emigrated to the United States in 2002 to pursue his theological studies at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, later obtaining his master of divinity. Following his education, Reverend Han became the associate pastor for the Korean congregation at First Presbyterian Church of Fort Wayne, IN.

Beyond his work at the pulpit, Reverend Han has utilized his voice to advocate for human rights, ensuring the most vulnerable are heard and supported.

In 2021, following the tragic Atlanta spa shootings, Reverend Han stepped up amidst a time of need and great fear within the Korean American community, organizing memorial efforts, comforting grieving families, and championing efforts to protect against anti-Asian hate.

Reverend Han has also worked to expand his church’s reach and impact around the world, building church facilities in Central and South America, visiting Ukraine to aid victims of war, providing earthquake relief efforts in Turkey, and assisting in the construction of a grain mill and providing mosquito nets across Africa.

As Georgia’s U.S. Senator, I congratulate and commend Rev. Byeong Cheol Han and First Lady Sunji Yang for this esteemed milestone and for their years of devoted service to the State of Georgia.●

REMEMBERING BOB FOSTER

• Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the life of Bob Foster, an enterprising business leader, clean energy visionary, and former mayor of the city of Long Beach, CA.

Born on January 1, 1947, in Brooklyn, NY, Robert “Bob” Foster learned the value of hard work early by laying

flooring with his father, a trade that eventually helped him pay his way through college at San Jose State University, where he graduated in 1969.

In 1971, Bob was hired by the California State Senate Energy Committee, where his hard work and intellect earned him the position of chief of staff just a year later. Early on, Bob worked on legislation that would help lead to the creation of the California Energy Commission and establish statewide energy efficiency standards.

In 1984, Bob was hired by Southern California Edison to serve as principal liaison to the California Legislature. After working his way up and helping SCE build up a pioneering renewable energy portfolio, in 2002, Bob became president of the company.

But many Californians remember Bob best for his leadership in public office. In 2006, Bob was elected mayor of the city of Long Beach, a position he would hold for two terms. Not long into his first term, California and the Nation were plunged into the depths of the Great Recession. But even at a time of great economic uncertainty, as mayor, Bob's disciplined leadership and steady hand helped Long Beach weather the storm, stabilizing the city's finances and creating the first budget surplus in 14 years, making significant environmental investments in the Port of Long Beach, and bringing violent crime numbers down to the lowest point in over four decades.

As longtime Long Beach City prosecutor Doug Haubert said: "He was the kind of leader who knew it was up to him to make tough decisions. He had to lead us during the recession, and he did just that."

Today, Bob's legacy lives on through the students of the ACE Academy at Jordan High School, learning construction and engineering; through the student-athletes at Long Beach State who are fortunate to receive the James Foster Endowed Scholarship, named after Bob's late son; and with all those who pass through the "Bob Foster Civic Chambers."

Angela and I send our love to Bob's wife Nancy and his entire family.●

150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA

● Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and celebrate a milestone of 150 years in the making—one that began long before Santa Monica appeared on a map and long before the first plots of land were sold.

When discussing the inception of Santa Monica, we often start in July of 1875. That summer, U.S. Senator John P. Jones and Colonel Robert S. Baker came together to imagine a town. What was once a vision discussed between two business partners soon became the city we know and love today. Senator Jones was a pioneer of California who settled in Trinity County in 1850 and served in elected office at the State and Federal level. Colonel Baker, origi-

nally from Rhode Island, arrived during the Gold Rush, building businesses in San Francisco before purchasing the Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica in 1872.

Together, they mapped out a future. But they were not the first to steward this land. Before the idea of Santa Monica existed, the Tongva Gabrielino people lived throughout the Los Angeles Basin and the Channel Islands. Their history, the care they held for the coastline, and their significant presence are central to the story we are honoring. In 2013, Tongva Park was dedicated in their honor. It stands as a reminder that any celebration of Santa Monica begins with recognizing the first people of this region.

Over the decades, Santa Monica earned many names. By its community, it may be recognized as the City by the Sea, the Pearl of the Pacific, or to some, the City of Inspiration. Each name reflects something true—its natural beauty, its creativity, and its ability to reinvent itself.

Santa Monica has always been a place of firsts. Early landmarks like the Arcadia Hotel and the North Beach Bath House helped shape the city's character. And even as times changed, Santa Monica has held tightly to its legacy. The Santa Monica Pier has welcomed visitors for over 115 years. The Galley, Gilbert's El Indio, and Chez Jay still serve as local favorites. The Aero Theatre, which opened in 1940, continues to invite film lovers to experience classics, blockbusters, and nights with the industry's best.

For 150 years, Santa Monica has been a hub of art, culture, sports, architecture, technology, and bold civic engagement. Through December 2025, the city will celebrate with a monthlong series of events designed by residents, artists, neighborhood organizations, and community leaders. This celebration belongs to everyone that calls Santa Monica their home, whether in their hearts or at their doorstep.

The story of Santa Monica will continue in every community space and effort to build a city where everyone feels welcome. Here is to 150 years of Santa Monica and to the future that is imagined.●

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH TREK TO THE NATION'S CHRISTMAS TREE

● Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 100th Annual Trek to the Nation's Christmas Tree in Kings Canyon National Park in California.

Also known as the General Grant Tree, it is located in Grant Grove, home to many giant sequoias, and is one of the oldest trees in the world, standing proudly for millennia. This magnificent tree stands 268 feet tall, with its lowest branch 130 feet above ground, and has a 107-foot trunk circumference. For 100 years, visitors have gathered on the second Sunday in December at the base of the tree to

honor veterans and the Christmas holiday.

The trek started in 1925 when R.J. Senior, then-president of the Sanger Chamber of Commerce, and Charles E. Lee, then-secretary of the Sanger Chamber of Commerce, wandered into Grant Grove. While they marveled at the massive tree, they overheard a little girl say, "What a lovely Christmas tree that would be." That statement sparked Lee to write a letter to the President of the United States Calvin Coolidge to suggest that the General Grant Tree be recognized as the Nation's Christmas Tree. Four months later, on April 28, 1926, the General Grant was officially designated the Nation's Christmas Tree by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Later, on October 1, 1949, Sanger, CA, was recognized by the Post Office Department as the Nation's Christmas Tree City.

The Tree was further recognized on March 29, 1956, when Congress designated the General Grant Tree as a National Shrine. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz represented U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower in dedicating the General Grant Tree as a perpetual shrine to our Nation's fallen veterans. Members of the National Park Service join in the Nation's Christmas Tree services each year by placing a wreath at the base of the tree.

Because of the pride and dedication of the Sanger community, the Nation's Christmas Tree is known nationally and internationally.

I ask all Members to join me in celebrating the 100th Annual Trek to the Nation's Christmas Tree on December 14, 2025.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Holstead, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

TRANSMITTING NOTICE OF THE INTENT TO DESIGNATE THE REPUBLIC OF PERU AS A MAJOR NON-NATO ALLY—PM 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2321k), I am providing notice of my intent to designate the Republic of Peru as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNNA).

The United States and the Republic of Peru maintain a strong relationship built on mutual interests and shared security priorities, including regional stability, counternarcotics, and economic ties. Designating the Republic of