

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING CHRISTINA  
HARRIS-JONES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I was very sorry to hear of the death of Christina Harris-Jones, director of the Senate Employees' Child Care Center. By all accounts, Ms. Harris-Jones was exactly the kind of person you would want to head up a center like the SECCC: knowledgeable, dedicated, warm, and deeply committed to early childhood education. She joined the SECCC during a challenging time, while the repercussions of the COVID pandemic were still being felt, and provided a sense of stability and security for staff and parents alike.

During her tenure at the center, she enriched the resources the center provides with extracurriculars like music and gymnastics. She also focused on team enrichment, ensuring that her employees had access to professional development opportunities and promoting work-life balance. Above all, she made the center a place where you could feel comfortable dropping off your son or daughter in the mornings. My thoughts and prayers are with her loved ones and family, and most especially with her beloved daughter Christiana who, like her mom, serves Senate families at the SECCC.

REMEMBERING SAMUEL R.  
HARRIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Hebrew phrase "l'dor v'dor" means "from generation to generation," and it is an important principle in the Jewish faith. This phrase describes the passage of beliefs, values, and traditions from parent to child, mentor to student. "L'dor v'dor" is a message of Jewish resilience, a testament to their continued spirit in the face of centuries of oppression. My friend Samuel R. Harris was the living embodiment of this maxim.

As one of the youngest survivors of the Holocaust, Sam dedicated his life to telling his story of growing up in Nazi-occupied Poland. Sam played an indispensable part in expanding Holocaust education in Illinois, where he helped create the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. In doing so, Sam inspired thousands of people to stand up against hate, injustice, and oppression. Sam was a powerful force for good, and it is with deep sadness that I share the news of his passing.

Sam was born in Deblin, Poland, in 1935, as the youngest of seven children to an Orthodox Jewish family. His childhood before the war was filled with happiness and joy, but it would last only 4 short years before the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939. Deblin was one of the locations where the Polish Air Force trained, which meant that it was a target for the Luftwaffe, who blanketed the city with bombs at the start of their invasion. Soon after, the Nazis arrived in Sam's town, where they terrorized and beat Jewish families. They evicted Sam's family from their home and forced them to live in one of the Nazi-created ghettos, designed to starve the Jewish population who inhabited them.

Sam lived in the ghetto until 1942, when the Nazis escalated their genocide campaign and began to round up families to be taken to extermination camps. As Sam walked with his parents toward the cattle car, his father pushed him out of the line so that Sam could escape execution. Sam ran and hid with his two sisters Rosa and Sara. Rosa, the oldest of the three, was forced to work in a labor camp outside of Deblin, and she smuggled Sam and Sara with her, as they were too young to survive on their own. Sam never saw his parents or his other siblings again; they were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp and murdered.

Sam and his two surviving siblings remained in Nazi concentration camps for nearly 3 years, where they were subject to daily abuse and torment. In January 1945, they were liberated by Russian soldiers, and soon after, Sam fled to Austria, then to America, arriving in Northbrook, IL, in 1947. When Sam arrived at his new home, he handed his adopted mother his suitcases and told her that he "never wanted to see his luggage again." Sam had hoped to leave his experience and trauma under Nazi occupation behind. As he went through high school and college, he never spoke about his childhood in Poland. Sam would go on to graduate from Grinnell College and build a successful career in the insurance industry. He met the love of his life Janice—"Dede"—and had two children Julie and David.

Sam had built a life for himself in America, but he could not leave his past behind. In the 1970s, the United States witnessed a resurgence in antisemitism, with the neo-Nazi marches in Skokie, IL, and Sam was increasingly encouraged by his family, friends, and other survivors to speak out about what he witnessed in Poland. Upon the insistence of Ernest Michel, Auschwitz survivor and Nuremberg Trials reporter, Sam became involved with the Illinois Holocaust Foundation. As Sam began to share his story, he took on a greater role in Holocaust education advocacy in Illinois. Sam pushed Illinois to become the first State in the Nation to make Holocaust education mandatory in public schools, which it did in 1990. He authored a memoir about his

experience and went on to teach thousands of students about what he went through as a Jewish person suffering under Nazi occupation.

Sam's most enduring accomplishment lies in the creation of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, which opened its doors in 2009. Sam fought tirelessly for its construction, organizing donation drives, public interest, and governmental support. Before the creation of the new museum, the largest Holocaust education center in Illinois was barely equipped to handle 30,000 visitors in 1 year. Thanks to Sam, more than 100,000 students now visit Skokie every year to learn about the Holocaust and the importance of tolerance. The museum itself, while currently closed for renovations, is designed to contain a dark side, depicting Hitler's rise and the Nazi plans for the final solution, and a bright side, describing the joint resistance to Nazi fascism by Jewish and non-Jewish people alike.

In a way, the museum's format mirrors Sam's life. His childhood was filled with unimaginable pain and heartache, yet he never lost his faith in humanity. In his book, Sam wrote that "everyone has both good and bad [in them]. I choose to look at the good." Sam embodied this sentiment every day. He was filled with love for the people around him, and he spent his time on Earth committed to the idea that through education and learning we might bring out more of the good in people. In 2014, Sam won the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, one of America's most eminent awards, in honor of his resilience and his advocacy. Despite Sam's numerous awards and accomplishments, he maintained that the best thing to ever happen to him was his wife Dede. Loretta and I send our deepest condolences to Dede, Julie, and Sam's grandchildren Jessica and Jeremy.

Sam wrote at the end of his memoir that "good will prevail in the long run." Through sharing his story, his faith, and his unyielding optimism, Sam brought us closer to that reality. From generation to generation, Sam taught us the lessons of his past so that we may create a better future. May his memory be a blessing.

JOINT RESOLUTIONS OF  
DISAPPROVAL

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, it is time to lead with diplomacy and negotiate an end to the war in Iran. This war has cost the lives of U.S. servicemembers, worsened the economic strains facing Americans, and spread instability across the Middle East.

At the same time, we need to focus on diplomacy to end the conflict in Lebanon and to preserve the possibility for Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate a two-state solution, which I have long supported.

At this time, I do not believe that providing bulldozer equipment and additional offensive weapons will help to

achieve these objectives, not when destruction in the West Bank is undermining prospects for an eventual Palestinian state, civilian casualties are mounting in Lebanon, and the humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. My support for these joint resolutions is consistent with my votes last July.

I have consistently supported Israel's right and capacity to protect its people, including through air defense systems to intercept missiles and drones. I strongly believe Iran must not obtain a nuclear weapon. Today, the United States should prioritize diplomacy to secure this goal.

---

#### REMEMBERING WILLIAM "BILL" LUNNEY

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life and work of Mr. William "Bill" George Lunney, a beloved and passionate leader in the Dane County, WI, parks and conservation community. Bill served for 30 years as chair of the Dane County Park Commission, where he made a tremendous and lasting impact on our outdoor spaces. Our community mourns his loss, and his contributions will be remembered for generations to come.

Bill was born in 1941 in Goshen, NY. He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he earned a bachelor of arts in political science and his law degree. After graduation, Bill moved to Madison, WI, where he began a 57-year career dedicated to environmental stewardship and public service.

Bill's career began with a variety of roles in the Wisconsin State court system. He was elected to the Dane County Board of Supervisors in 1969, and his passion for public service was evident early on in his career. While serving on the Dane County Board, Bill emerged as a leading local conservation champion. He spoke at our Nation's first Earth Day celebration in 1970 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Recognizing that conservation requires both public and private sector leadership, he cofounded the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. The organization played a vital role in protecting natural areas from development and ensuring responsible stewardship of existing lands. Bill's leadership was instrumental in safeguarding Madison's wetlands and advancing conservation efforts across the region.

While serving as chair of the Dane County Park Commission, Bill, alongside his wife Judie Pfeifer, cofounded the Foundation for Dane County Parks and went on to serve as its president. Together, they built a permanent endowment to support and sustain Dane County Parks for generations to come.

By the end of his tenure, Dane County parkland had grown from 3,500 acres to more than 18,000 acres, a remarkable expansion driven in large part by Bill's leadership and his ability to inspire others to value conservation. In recognition of his life's work, Bill will be

inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame this April, an honor that both excited and humbled him.

Above all, those who knew Bill best say he always put his family first. He was a loving husband, son, father, and grandfather. Bill's legacy is reflected not only in the land he helped preserve, but in the people he inspired. Known for his encouragement and curiosity, he left an indelible mark on the conservation community through his steady leadership and vision.

Bill often repeated the mantra, "A park is not just a piece of land, it is a vibrant part of the community." The Madison area is better because Bill himself was such a vibrant part of that community. I am deeply grateful for Bill's lasting impact on preserving our natural environment. His work will continue to benefit the Madison community and will live on in those he inspired throughout his service to Dane County.

---

#### REMEMBERING CYNTHIA M. FERGUSON

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, I am honored to celebrate the life and legacy of Cynthia M. Ferguson, a distinguished public servant, accomplished attorney, dedicated advocate for environmental justice, and fellow Marylander, who unfortunately passed away on March 12 at the age of 58.

Ms. Ferguson dedicated more than 25 years to serving the American people at the U.S. Department of Justice with dedication and integrity. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and the Chicago-Kent College of Law at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Ms. Ferguson rose from honors trial attorney within the Environment and Natural Resources Division to leading the Department's first-ever Office of Environmental Justice during the Biden administration. In this role, she led efforts to ensure that all communities, particularly those historically overburdened by pollution, receive fair and equal protection under environmental laws.

Ms. Ferguson understood that environmental justice is not an abstract concept but a lived reality for families concerned about the air they breathe and the water they drink, and she dedicated her career to addressing those concerns. Her efforts and leadership made a meaningful difference in communities across the country and helped shape a more equitable approach to environmental protection.

I extend my condolences to her family, friends, and colleagues. Ms. Cynthia M. Ferguson's legacy of service, integrity, and commitment to justice will endure, and she will be greatly missed.

---

#### RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL OF MESSMER HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Messmer High

School in Milwaukee, WI, on their 100th anniversary. I am pleased to honor this organization and to commemorate this historic milestone.

Founded by Archbishop Sebastian Messmer in 1926 in the city of Milwaukee, Messmer High School was built on a vision of uniting Milwaukee's Catholic parishes and providing a high-quality education rooted in faith for the city's immigrant families. For the past 100 years, Messmer has been a cornerstone of education and opportunity in Milwaukee.

In the 1920s, Milwaukee was a diverse industrial city defined by established immigrant communities. There were large German, Polish, Italian, Mexican, and Eastern European immigrant populations throughout the city, many of which were working-class and low-income. Throughout its early years, led by the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Capuchin Friars, Messmer quickly became a thriving center of academic excellence, spiritual formation, and community spirit.

Over the past century, Messmer has earned a reputation for its welcoming, family-like culture and a commitment to preparing students for both college and the trades. After the Great Depression and World War II, the school evolved with the changing landscape of Milwaukee to embrace new generations of students from diverse backgrounds. Messmer has become one of Milwaukee's most integrated Catholic high schools through its model of inclusion and faith in action.

In the 1980s, the archdiocese announced plans to close the school. However, a group of determined parents and alumni refused to let Messmer's mission die. This grassroots effort is deemed the "Messmer Miracle" and helped reopen the school while instilling a lasting sense of pride in the institution. Countless people and families have been shaped by Messmer over the past 100 years through the education it provides and the strong sense of community it fosters.

As we honor this significant milestone for Messmer High School, I am grateful for their continued education of Milwaukee's youth, and I look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

---

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

---

##### REMEMBERING NANCY COOK

● Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of former Delaware State Senator Nancy W. Cook, who passed away on March 23, 2026, at the age of 89. While she will be remembered for her extraordinary leadership in public office, Nancy was, above all, a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, trusted friend, and a steadfast pillar of her community. My thoughts are with her son Tom, daughter-in-law Beth, and all who knew and loved her.