

sent to investigate the atrocities while the CNDD crackdown cast a dark shadow on Guinea's prospects for peace and stability.

During this period, I was pleased to see the Obama administration engage proactively to help reverse Guinea's political crisis—particularly in the aftermath of the shooting of CNDD leader Captain Dadis Camara. In those fragile moments of uncertainty, the consistent diplomacy undertaken by our senior officials played an important role. Working with key regional actors and organizations, the State Department helped to broker an important political agreement, known as the Ouagadougou Declaration, which was widely welcomed as an end to the protracted political vacuum that had existed. The signing of this agreement ushered in a transitional united government that, while imperfect, has been actively supported by the Obama administration.

Unquestionably Guinea remains on delicate ground but the upcoming Presidential elections scheduled for June 27 create an opportunity for Guinea—and our bilateral relationship—to progress forward. Undoubtedly the process will be chaotic and messy, but there is a good chance we could see this beleaguered country bounce back from decades of mismanagement. Of course, in order for Guinea to truly progress, these elections must be the beginning of serious and sustained reform—a process which must also include accountability for the abuses committed in September 2009. Elections are only one component of the democratic process, but still they are a significant one and may give the people of Guinea their long deserved chance to finally turn the page on their troubled political history.

While there are plenty of factors that could lead to another election postponement including the will of the transitional government and the capacity and efficiency of the election commission, I remain optimistic that this will not occur. Certainly there are real challenges to fostering democracy given Guinea's history, but the recent commitment from the Acting President and Chief of the Army to remain neutral and ensure the elections are free, credible, and transparent should not go without notice. I have long said that promoting and supporting democratic institutions should be a key tenet of our engagement with Africa, as institution building is essential to Africa's stability and its prosperity. In the case of Guinea—a nation that has great potential to flourish and thrive—credible elections are an important first step on the road to better governance.

TRIBUTE TO RON GETTELFINGER

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, leaders demonstrate their talent and character not when life is easy but at times of crisis. During the greatest crisis in the

history of the American auto industry, that industry's workers and the communities in which they live have benefited enormously from the leadership of a quiet Kentuckian whose devotion to working families cannot be overstated.

When Ron Gettelfinger took office as president of the United Auto Workers in 2002, I do not think anyone, and certainly not Ron, foresaw the turbulence ahead. As his 8 years as president of the UAW come to a close, it is time to congratulate and thank him for exceptional leadership in tough times.

Ron navigated those rough waters guided by two lights: a clear-eyed assessment of what was necessary to preserve America's auto industry, and the sure knowledge that millions of families depended on its preservation.

That knowledge came from Ron's days on the assembly line at Ford's Louisville assembly plant, from his days as his plant's local president, from his service as regional president for UAW members in Indiana and Kentucky, and from his time at Solidarity House in Detroit. He is a sharp, tough-minded negotiator, but underlying his talents and skills is a real emotional bond with the workers who have depended on his leadership. That bond with his members meant that when Ron Gettelfinger asked them to make sacrifices, they knew it was not because he was taking the easy way out, but because it was necessary.

The sacrifices have been great. Ron knows this better than anybody. But he also knows that in making those sacrifices, the workers of the UAW have set the stage for a renaissance in the U.S. auto industry, one that is already taking shape in the form of increased sales, more consumer confidence, and a commitment to the clean energy technologies that will shape our transportation future.

I have been proud to stand with Ron Gettelfinger in many of his battles. Members of the United Auto Workers honor the leaders who over nearly a century of progress and challenge have guided their union. I have no doubt that for generations yet to come, those workers will honor Ron's work in guiding their union through one of the most difficult periods in its history.

TRIBUTE TO NINA THOMAS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I express my sincere congratulations and best wishes to Nina Thomas on her retirement as registrar at Vermont Law School. Since 1976, Nina has served that institution with dedication and a devotion to its students. As Ms. Thomas ends her many years of exceptional service to Vermont Law School and its students, I wish her the very best as she enters this new chapter of her life. I thank her for her service, and I know her commitment over the years has helped to make the school the special, unique place it is today.

Nina Thomas is a native of Vermont, having attended grade school in the

same building that is now part of the Vermont Law School campus in South Royalton, VT. In 1976 she returned to be part of a fledgling institution where her care, her counsel, and her wisdom have made a difference in the lives of many law students who have passed through her office. Her dedication helped the school grow into a successful institution for legal education that is a source of pride for Vermont and Vermonters. Her career spanned from the early days of the school's beginnings to the present, where it stands as a national leader in environmental legal thinking and learning.

As Nina Thomas enters her retirement, I hope she will take great comfort in knowing that the mark she left at Vermont Law School will be a lasting one and that her contributions are part of the school's strong foundation. I know she will be dearly missed by faculty and staff and most especially the students to whom she has given so much.

TRIBUTE TO TOM HOWARD

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute today to a man who has provided immeasurable leadership and dedication to the lives of young people and families around the State of Vermont, Tom Howard of East Montpelier. After 31 years as executive director, Tom will be retiring this month from the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club.

Tom is a native Vermonter who, while growing up, lived in the Philippines, Panama, Germany, and throughout the United States. He served in the U.S. Army in Korea between 1963 and 1966, and earned a B.A. from Johnson State College in history and international relations in 1970. Tom went on to earn a master's degree in executive development in public service at Ball State University in 1974, and wrote his master's thesis on youthful offenders.

Appointed as executive director of the bureau in 1979, Tom has built the agency into a diverse organization with statewide impact. Under his leadership, the organization developed cutting-edge programs, like the Return House in Barre, VT—a program operated by the Washington County Youth Service Bureau for 18- to 22-year-old young men who are returning to the community after being incarcerated. In addition to his commitment to working with young people and youthful offenders, Tom has secured millions of dollars in Federal, State, and foundation grants to bring sustainable services and opportunities to youth.

We are fortunate in Vermont. I am always impressed by the high level of collaboration on behalf of Vermont's communities to solve its problems. Over the years, I have brought the Senate Judiciary Committee to Vermont several times for field hearings to explore community efforts to counter drug-related crime in rural America.