

world for us all. His many accomplishments will live on as a testament to his profound commitment to our nation and to a life of public service. But for me, I will simply miss him as a friend.

THANKING STAFF

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to say thank you to the wonderful staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Earlier this week I had the privilege of chairing my final hearing in that committee, and I want to take a moment to extend my thanks and gratitude to those who have made this committee run so smoothly and professionally over the years.

Bertie Bowman's tenure here dates back to Senator Fulbright, and his extraordinary career, as the longest serving African American on Capitol Hill, speaks volumes about his character and commitment. It has been a true pleasure seeing Bertie at every hearing and it is largely thanks to his efforts, that our hearings run so smoothly.

Meg Murphy, the committee's protocol and foreign travel coordinator, has done a truly wonderful job ensuring that our travel, business meetings, and committee coffees always went off without a hitch. Her phenomenal attention to detail and thoroughness, in addition to her dedication and good humor has made her an invaluable asset to the committee.

I would also like to recognize Samantha Hamilton, Susan Oursler, as well as Gail Coppage for their hard work and dedication.

Last, I would like to thank Frank Lowenstein, staff director of the committee, whom I have gotten to know over the years, including during a trip we took together to the Middle East. I had the privilege of knowing Frank's father, Al Lowenstein, and I can say without a doubt how proud he would be of his son Frank.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MILWAUKEE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I recognize and congratulate the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council, MBCTC, on the occasion of their 100th anniversary.

For the past 100 years the MBCTC has literally built Milwaukee. Many of today's notable Milwaukee landmarks and buildings like the Petit National Ice Center, the Performing Arts Center, the Bradley Center, County Stadium, then Miller Park, Potawatomi Bingo and Casino, the Port Washington and Elm Road Generating Stations and most recently the Marquette Interchange are owed to the tireless work of members of the MBCTC.

Not only has the MBCTC truly had a hand in shaping the Milwaukee we know and love today but it has done so while tending to its membership, the

men and women of the building trades who make it all possible. The MBCTC remains true to its founding principles to represent its members in the building and construction trades for justice on the job, better wages and never sacrificing quality for its customers. For a century, their true commitment to members and their families as well as to our Milwaukee community has stood on solid foundation.

On behalf of our State and Nation, I join this centennial celebration in recognition of the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council. Let us honor their hard work and long history of building up Milwaukee into a great place to visit, work, live and raise a family.●

ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL DEBT

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today I wish to introduce to you one of my constituents, Lawrence "Rip" Kirby of Rutland, VT, who has written to me outlining his ideas on how Congress can and should address our \$13.8 trillion national debt in a fair and sensible way. I am pleased the citizens of Vermont are engaged on this issue, which is of critical importance to not only our State, but indeed the Nation. The decisions that we make on the Senate floor today will impact generations of Americans to come. That is why I would like to share with you what Mr. Kirby wrote:

To reduce the deficit and accumulated debt we must understand their root causes and history:

Short-term problem: The near-collapse of the economy was arrested by means of deficit spending, including corporate bailouts, extended unemployment benefits, and stimulus initiatives. While arguably necessary to stave off an even worse catastrophe, these measures have added to the deficit and the debt.

Solution(s): Our emphasis should not be on recovery of sunk costs but on prevention of future disasters. Break up "too large to fail" businesses through anti-trust laws. Regulate imprudent, secretive, or unfathomable financial arrangements like derivatives. Increase regulated safety margins like reserve requirements for banks and loan limits based on borrower credit ratings. Eliminate conflicts of interest like permitting bond rating agencies to have a financial stake in the companies they rate.

Medium-term problem: Our wars overseas have been funded by massive deficits with no real strategy for repayment. The unexpected length and intractability of these conflicts exacerbates the problem.

Solution(s): Stop the financial bleeding and provide a financial transfusion. To stop the bleeding we must get out of these conflicts within a short time (two years at most). Continue intelligence-gathering and maintain air power, but get the boots off the ground. To provide a transfusion, enact a temporary and progressive "war surtax" with a sunset provision.

Long-term problem: Entitlement spending (Medicare, Social Security, etc.) has exceeded its funding as America's longevity has climbed faster than its typical retirement age without tax increases to keep up. The mass retirement of the baby boomers will aggravate this problem as they become greater

consumers of entitlements and a lesser source of taxes.

Solution(s): Recognize that longevity is really an advantage, and make better use of people's lengthening ability to work and to contribute. In short, this means gradually raising the age of entitlement eligibility. We must also end the regressive and irrational Social Security tax exemption for earnings above \$108,000.

Long term problem: Our K-12 school system has deteriorated while foreign students have surged ahead in critical subjects like math, science, and language skills. The underlying cause is debated endlessly, but I believe we have replaced the hard work of learning with trendy feel-good initiatives that represent the path of least resistance for both educators and students. We also underfund education, thereby encouraging the employment of second-rate teachers, curricula, and facilities. This exacerbates the deficit by degrading our tax base as emerging generations of Americans are prepared for only menial jobs paying low wages.

Solution(s): Stop experimenting and do what works—get back to basics and pay for excellence. Reward teachers who cultivate competence. Emphasize math, science, and language skills, as well as less tangible, but important skills like inquiry and logic. Recognize sports programs as a way to teach critical social skills, not as a career path. Treat standardized testing as a means to excellence, not as an end in itself. And finally, forget self esteem—it will come on its own when it is earned."

Lawrence "Rip" Kirby
Rutland, Vt.

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to share with you these words of wisdom from an average Vermonter. I hope my colleagues in the Senate take note of Mr. Kirby's sage advice.●

RECOGNIZING HARBOR FARM

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, every holiday season, Americans head to stores in droves to buy the perfect gift for their loved ones or friends during the holiday season. Many will visit small businesses, such as gift shops and local retailers, which offer a variety of products. There is one such store in my home State of Maine, Harbor Farm, that helps keep the Christmas spirit alive year round through a variety of products that celebrate the season.

Harbor Farm is located on Little Deer Isle, a tiny island located off Maine's coast in Penobscot Bay. The island is both a picturesque summer vacationland as well as the year-round home to 300 residents. And Harbor Farm caters to locals and tourists alike with a variety of regional and international gifts, from candles to apparel and most everything in between. The store also carries gifts made by another local small business, the Deer Isle Granite Company, including beautiful clocks in the shape of the State of Maine as well as cutting boards and coasters.

Additionally, Harbor Farm has a unique "Christmas Room," with a plethora of thoughtful and creative goods and wares. More than simply holiday-themed gifts, the Christmas Room features exceptional items inspired by Maine, including blueberry jewelry

made using blue sponge coral as well as moose and snowman ornaments. Harbor Farm also offers delightful Christmas wreaths, made from Maine balsam and beautifully decorated with traditional cones, berries, and bows. In that same vein, the store also sells a number of centerpieces of cedar, balsam, and pine, adorned with candles and faux fruits. Harbor Farm readily ships these special holiday gifts and decorations across the country to a growing list of customers each year.

Another item Harbor Farm specializes in is remarkable tile. The company offers customers a wide array of beautiful tile from 17 States and 17 countries for any room in the home. The designs range from delicately painted lighthouses and landscapes to flowers and farmyards. The staff at Harbor Farm takes the time to assist clients looking to mix tiles for a more elegant and eclectic visual display.

It is evident that the employees of Harbor Farm take great pains to offer their customers high quality items for a broad swath of uses in everyday life. From its reproductions of early American furniture to pottery to clothing accessories, Harbor Farm is a quintessential New England gift shop that has something for everyone. I thank everyone at Harbor Farm for their dedicated efforts to provide shoppers with a pleasant experience, and I wish them many years of success.●

REMEMBERING THE VENERABLE ROS MEY

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I commemorate the extraordinary life of Venerable Ros Mey, the head Buddhist monk and president of the Wat Thormikaram Khmer Temple in Providence. Although he passed away on December 12, 2010, at age 85, his teachings of peace will live on in the vibrant Cambodian community of Rhode Island in which he served.

Venerable Mey was ordained as a Buddhist monk in Providence at age 62 and dedicated himself to his faith, his congregation, and to praying for peace in Cambodia with his fellow worshippers.

Venerable Mey's journey to Rhode Island was a perilous one. He and his family endured forced labor under the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia from 1975 until their escape to Thailand four years later. They made their way to Rhode Island as part of the first wave of refugees from Cambodia. Only several thousand of the 80,000 monks in Cambodia survived the Khmer Rouge.

Venerable Mey turned the adversity he experienced into peaceful teachings by dedicating his life to the Cambodian community in our State. In 1998 he became head monk and president, succeeding the Venerable Maha Ghosananda, also a renowned peace activist. Venerable Mey was a driving force behind a new worship hall at the Wat Thormikaram Temple, which is a spiritual center for Cambodian Bud-

dhists in Rhode Island and across the Nation.

His surviving family, the thousands of Rhode Islanders whose weddings and births he officiated, the Cambodian community, and the people of our State will remember his teachings of peace.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 1774. An act for the relief of Hotaru Nakama Ferschke.

S. 3199. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of hearing loss.

S. 3386. An act to protect consumers for certain aggressive sales tactics on the Internet.

S. 4010. An act for the relief of Shigeru Yamada.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1275. An act to establish a National Foundation on Physical Fitness and Sports to carry out activities to support and supplement the mission of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

S. 1448. An act to amend the Act of August 9, 1955, to authorize the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw, the Klamath Tribes, and the Burns Paiute Tribe to obtain 99-year lease authority for trust land.

S. 1609. An act to authorize a single fisheries cooperative for the Bering Sea Aleutian Islands longline catcher processor subsector, and for other purposes.

S. 2906. An act to amend the Act of August 9, 1955, to modify a provision relating to leases involving certain Indian tribes.

S. 3794. An act to amend chapter 5 of title 40, United States Code, to include organizations whose membership comprises substantially veterans as recipient organizations for the donation of Federal surplus personal property through State agencies.

S. 3984. An act to amend and extend the Museum and Library Services Act, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1061. An act to transfer certain land to the United States to be held in trust for the Hoh Indian Tribe, to place land into trust for the Hoh Indian Tribe, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6278. An act to amend the National Children's Island Act of 1995 to expand allowable uses for Kingman and Heritage Islands by the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bills were subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

At 10:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 6517. An act to extend trade adjustment assistance and certain trade preference programs, to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to modify temporarily certain rates of duty, and for other purposes.

At 10:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 5446. An Act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 600 Florida Avenue in Cocoa, Florida, as the "Harry T. and Harriette Moore Post Office".

H.R. 5493. An Act to provide for the furnishing of statues by the District of Columbia and territories and possessions of the United States for display in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol.

H.R. 6205. An Act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1449 West Avenue in Bronx, New York, as the "Private Isaac T. Cortes Post Office".

H.R. 6494. An Act to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 to improve the Littoral Combat Ship program of the Navy.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 30. An Act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to prohibit manipulation of caller identification information.

S. 3036. An Act to establish the National Alzheimer's Project.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolutions, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 72. Concurrent resolution recognizing the 45th anniversary of the White House Fellows Program.

S. Con. Res. 77. Concurrent resolution to provide for the approval of final regulations issued by the Office of Compliance to implement the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 that apply to certain legislative branch employing offices and their covered employees.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2965) entitled "An Act to amend the Small Business Act with respect to the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program, and for other purposes", with an amendment.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 11:13 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 1405. An act to redesignate the Longfellow National Historic Site, Massachusetts, as the "Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site".

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

At 1:14 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 4337) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify certain rules applicable to regulated investment companies, and for other purposes.

At 4:17 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by