

and encouraged to pursue their interests.

I applaud not only the students, but also the administrators, teachers, staff, and parents of Hope Elementary School. Together, they are succeeding in their mission to generate confidence and momentum for learning. They are making a difference in the lives of their students, helping them reach their full potential as independent, responsible learners and as engaged citizens.

I am pleased that the U.S. Department of Education has selected Hope Elementary School for this well-deserved honor, and I congratulate the entire community for this outstanding achievement.

#### U.S. ARMY'S SUICIDE STAND DOWN DAY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today during Suicide Prevention Month to recognize the Army's Suicide Stand Down Day, which will take place later this month on September 27, 2012.

The stand down is an opportunity for the Army to take a hard look at current efforts to address the issue of suicide among soldiers and focus on ways to improve these efforts. It will emphasize eliminating the stigma surrounding mental health injuries, which too often prevents our service men and women from getting the help they need.

This could not come at a more critical time. The incidence of suicide among our troops has skyrocketed to alarming levels due, in part, to over 10 years of repeated and protracted deployments to combat zones around the world. In fact, the Army experienced a record-high 38 Active-Duty suicides in July and is on track to surpass last year's total. This is absolutely tragic and requires urgent and sustained action.

The central theme of the stand down is "Shoulder to Shoulder: We Stand up for Life." This is such a critical message—our servicemembers should never have to suffer alone. Our military men and women make tremendous sacrifices each and every day in service to our Nation, and we have a sacred obligation to take care of them in return. This means ensuring they feel comfortable seeking the care that they need without fear or repercussion or being stigmatized. This also means improving access to mental health care and providing support for our military families.

While there is no single solution to preventing military suicide, efforts like the Army's Suicide Stand Down Day are important steps because they provide an opportunity to have a frank conversation across all levels of leadership about the profound stressors our troops are experiencing.

I strongly encourage all branches of our military to continue to review and improve their suicide prevention programs because it is clear that more

must be done and that it must be done now.

Suicide reaches far beyond one individual—it devastates entire families and affects communities. Our military families are resilient and they display incredible courage in the face of so many unique challenges, but no one person or family can be strong all the time.

That is why we must continue to do everything in our power to send the message to our servicemembers, veterans, and their families that it is OK to ask for help and that the care and support they need is waiting for them.

I urge our citizens, our government, and our Nation to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Armed Forces and recommit ourselves to stemming the tide of military suicide once and for all because we can all agree that one suicide is one too many.

#### REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ELECTION IN TAIWAN

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, in August I submitted a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the U.S. Government should continue to support democracy and human rights in Taiwan following the January 2012 Presidential and legislative elections. The International Election Observers Mission has prepared a Report on the National Election in Taiwan that includes some important details and findings. I ask unanimous consent that the summary of that report be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

##### REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ELECTION IN TAIWAN, JANUARY 14, 2012

To: International Committee for Fair Elections in Taiwan

From: The International Election Observers Mission (IEOM)

By: Woodrow W. Clark II MA, PhD, Lead Author and Senator Frank Murkowski, Chair and all IEOM Members.

##### OVERVIEW

Taiwan is an island nation of 23.2 million people (November 2011) in an area of 35,980 sq. km. The nation has 18.1 million eligible voters, all citizens who are 20 or more years of age. The winner of the January 14, 2012 Presidential Election, with 51.6 per cent of the vote, was Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, the incumbent and the nominee, Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT). Ms. Tsai Ing-wen of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) followed with 45.6 per cent and the nominee of the small People First Party (PFP), Mr. James Soong received about 2.8 per cent of the vote (Taiwan Election Results, January 2012).

At the same time, voters also elected the 113 members of the national parliament, the Legislative Yuan. The KMT won 64 seats, while the DPP won 40 seats and the PFP, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and non-partisan independent candidates each won three seats. Compared with the 2008 legislative election, the KMT won 17 fewer seats, the DPP gained 13 additional seats, the PFP won two additional seats and the TSU, with its three seats, returned to the legislature after a four-year absence.

##### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Taiwan experienced a long political struggle during the authoritarian era. Democracy in Taiwan only began after the death of President Chiang Ching-kuo in January 1988 and the accession of Lee Teng-hui to the presidency. The political system is not divided between "left" and "right," though the DPP does place somewhat more emphasis on "social justice." Instead, "the primary political cleavage between the political parties has been and remains the issue of national identity, often referred to as the 'unification-independence' issue" (Taiwan Elections Handbook, 2012: p.13), or between the "pan-blue" alliance (Kuomintang and associated parties) and the "pan-green" alliance (DPP and aligned parties).

Mr. Ma's percentage of the vote fell from the 58 per cent he gained four years earlier and, as indicated earlier, the new KMT majority in the legislature was much less than the huge victory, which it won in 2008 (Cole, March 9, 2012).

##### THE INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVER MISSION (IEOM)

Eighteen (18) observers from seven countries were invited by the International Committee for Fair Elections in Taiwan (ICFET) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) for the January 2012 Presidential and Legislative elections in Taiwan. See the list of members of the IEOM below in Table 1.

The group consisted of observers from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United States, ranging in experiences from academia, elected representatives, religious groups, businesses, and civil society. As observers, the IEOM members tried to be strictly neutral in all their activities, data gathering, and conclusions.

Most members of the IEOM were in Taiwan from January 10–15, 2012. Members visited locations in Taipei, Kaohsiung, Tainan, and Taichung. As a group, they met with campaign organizers, staff, and candidates from the three political parties running presidential tickets: the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), and the People First Party (PFP). Then, on the day before the election (January 13, 2012) and during Election Day (January 14, 2012), the IEOM split into smaller groups of 2–4 members who observed political rallies, street campaigns, and polling station as well as the Central Election Commission counting center on Election Day.

This report consists of direct IEOM observations by its members as well as other sources, including the Taiwan and international press as well as post-election news sources in Chinese and English. Other observer groups were also present in Taiwan.

One other neutral observation group, the Asian Network for Free Elections Foundation (ANFREL), headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand, deserves special mention. ANFREL produced an Observers Report (entitled "Credible Elections but a Tilted Playing Field") after the Election that corresponds with many IEOM observations as well as our Press Release and this Report. The ANFREL Report (2012) will be cited herein.

##### FULL REPORT

The full report of the IEOM was published in Taiwan on June 11th 2012, and is available on the website of the International Committee for Fair Elections in Taiwan (ICFET) at: <http://www.taiwanelections.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Taiwan-2012-Elections-IEOM-Final-Report.pdf>