Texas made her the first woman to represent them in the Senate. In the three regular elections since then, they have confirmed their trust in her by ever-increasing margins. As the leader of the Senate Commerce Committee, KAY has been a strong voice for transportation systems that are efficient, safe, and secure. In my own work on the Homeland Security Committee, I am well aware of the major role she played in drafting the airline security bill that Congress passed after the attacks on 9/11/01. She has also worked successfully to include more effective air cargo screening.

From the America COMPETES Act to her steadfast support for NASA, KAY is determined our country will not cede its position as the world's leader in science, technology, and space exploration. When the NASA rover Curiosity thrilled all of us with its perfect landing on Mars this past August, the hands of KAY'S legislative leadership were on the controls. Working with KAY as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I know how dedicated she is to ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. She is a champion for our small business owners and for policies that promote free enterprise and job creation.

Her complete commitment to the men and women of our Armed Forces is reflected in her years of service on the Armed Services Committee as well as the Military Construction Subcommittee on Appropriations, and her unanimous election this year to serve as chairman of the Board of Visitors at West Point.

In the afterword to her book, KAY wrote that as a young girl growing up in Texas she was so inspired by the lives of great Americans that by the sixth grade she had exhausted all of the biographies on the school library shelf and had to turn elsewhere for book report material. I am sure the story of her own contributions and accomplishments will be avidly read by generations of girls and boys to come.

I wish her all the best as she turns a new page in what has truly been a remarkable life of public service.

SCOTT BROWN

Mr. President, when SCOTT BROWN, a fellow New Englander, came to the Senate 2 years ago, I immediately saw in him those traits shared by the people of our two New England States: a strong work ethic, a determination to always do what he thought was right, and a spirit that was independent and dedicated to doing what was best for his constituents and for his country.

My initial assessment was confirmed by our time working together on so many issues. SCOTT conducted his inspiring 2010 campaign via his now legendary pickup truck. When he got to Washington, he kept his foot on the gas. His work in government at the State and local level in Massachusetts and his distinguished service in the Army National Guard prepared him with experience that made him a respected and effective legislator from day one. His intellect, energy, and character made him a valued colleague and a dear friend.

SCOTT is a person one could always count on. I have had the opportunity to work closely with SCOTT on so many key issues. In each and every case he brought an informed, thoughtful, and open-minded approach to every issue.

As the ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I have gotten to know SCOTT very well and I appreciate his service on our committee. He placed his top priority on helping to keep our Nation safe from the continuing threat of terrorism. He also worked hard to make our Federal Government more efficient and transparent.

With SCOTT'S leadership, the Senate passed bipartisan legislation to help put the Postal Service back on a more sound financial footing and to ensure that this institution could endure. He also authored the STOCK Act, the new law that clearly prohibits insider trading by Members of Congress and their staff.

SCOTT has long been an effective champion for our small business owners, working to ensure that entrepreneurs and innovators in Massachusetts and across the country have the ability to survive and thrive and, most of all, to create good jobs. He has advocated for our Nation's veterans through the Hiring Our Heroes Act that he coauthored, which provides tax credits to small businesses that hire a returning veteran or member of the National Guard Reserve.

SCOTT has been a devoted advocate in the Senate for fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget amendment. At the same time, he kept a firm commitment to helping those most in need. He fought hard for such vital programs as the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program, which is so important to getting through those cold New England winters.

Equally important to SCOTT'S hard work in the Senate has been the approach he has always taken in legislating. He studies the issues. He seeks areas where a consensus can be found. From the very first day in the Senate, he demonstrated his belief that compromise is not a dirty word but an absolute necessity if we are to meet the challenges facing America. SCOTT always looked at the issues before Congress not through the lens of a partisan politician but, rather, through the lens of a pragmatic problem-solver.

SCOTT'S tenure in the Senate has been far too brief but, perhaps more important, it has been characterized by a remarkable degree of success in transforming good ideas into public laws. Given his Maine roots and strong commitment to Massachusetts, I am sure we will remain good friends in the years to come. But, oh, how I will miss serving with my friend SCOTT BROWN.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today is Human Rights Day, and I wanted to simply add my voice to the many others who have spoken about the important work the United States can do to continue our leadership around the world as a country that holds itself accountable and leads others toward being accountable for a world in which human rights have meaning and substance. There are two things we can do between now and the end of this calendar year that will make a significant contribution to human rights and to the U.S. global leadership.

First, the House of Representatives can take up and pass VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization bill passed months ago by this Chamber. It is a strong, broad, sensible reauthorization bill that I think well deserves consideration and passage by the other Chamber.

Second, TVPA, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, needs to be reauthorized. I was proud last month to join with Senator PORTMAN and the Presiding Officer, Senator BLUMENTHAL, as the three of us jointly founded the Caucus to End Human Trafficking. Slavery exists in the world today. In this country and around the world, there are victims of human trafficking whose voices demand to be heard. By reauthorizing TVPA, this Chamber and this country can make a meaningful contribution toward ending trafficking of persons in the United States and around the world.

I simply wanted to add today, Human Rights Day, those two simple calls for action so this Congress and this country can continue our global leadership.

The House of Representatives needs to take up and pass VAWA and the Senate needs to pass the TVPA reauthorization. Together let us continue to make history in America's leadership on human rights.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I rise today on Human Rights Day. Now,

there are a plethora of days in this Nation known for various causes, for issues, and for historical occurrences. Human Rights Day is fundamentally American.

The rights of human beings are the reason this Nation was founded and the motivation for the war that was fought to make us free. Human Rights Day is about advancing equality, and the U.S. Constitution as it has expanded over the years to include new groups of people and strike down barriers of race, gender, ethnic background, and national origin. It is about the progress of human rights and equality, the noblest of causes for this Nation. It is about what brings us together as Americans, the fight for freedom, the search for equality and justice.

I want to talk about three specific ways we can advance the cause of human rights in this Chamber, in this session, through measures that are now before us. The first concerns human trafficking. I have been particularly interested in the rampant human trafficking problems on American military bases abroad in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Victims are recruited from developing countries like Bangladesh and the Philippines. They are charged exorbitant, illegal fees to travel to their worksites, often misled about where they are going, what their salaries will be, and what their living conditions will be like. Frequently, their passports are confiscated so they cannot return home, even if they are able to scrape together the money to make that journey.

This kind of human trafficking is no less than modern-day slavery, subsidized by our government with taxpayer money. It is reprehensible. But, for me, the number one issue is the safety of our American troops on these bases. That safety is compromised if our bases are filled with unauthorized, potentially unsafe foreign workers.

That is why I introduced the End Trafficking in Government Contracting Act of 2012, which provides the most comprehensive legislative approach to solving this problem ever undertaken by the United States Congress. It is bipartisan legislation, which now is included in the Defense Reauthorization bill that passed the Senate last week, and I am hopeful that this provision will be retained in conference committee and signed into law soon with strong bipartisan support from my colleague, Senator PORTMAN of Ohio.

In addition, I want to thank Senator LEAHY for advancing the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, a broader measure known by its initials, TVPRA, which takes an even more inclusive view of this problem to make sure America stands against human trafficking rather than be complicit in it.

The second issue I want to raise is the VAWA, or the Violence Against Women Act, which continues to be stalled in the House of Representatives. Tragically, incomprehensibly, and passed by this body, VAWA still has not been approved in a form that is acceptable by the House of Representatives. Reauthorizing VAWA is a top priority for me, and I know for many in this body, as well. My hope is that the House of Representatives will act in the final weeks of this session.

VAWA is a landmark statute aimed at combating domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It provides billions of dollars to support investigations and prosecutions of vicious, heinous acts, and it provides remedies and protection for assaulted women.

On this day, when we celebrate human rights, what better way than to commemorate the advances that VAWA made in fighting violence against women and to broaden its provisions to protect Native Americans, immigrants in this country, and the gay and lesbian community. That is the nature of our democracy: we advance human rights, we make them more inclusive, and we broaden their provisions. The reauthorization of this legislation is badly needed.

Finally, I want to talk about the DREAM Act, which should be part of immigration reform in this country. I think the vast majority of the Members of the Senate have accepted and indeed espoused the need for thorough, comprehensive immigration reform. That kind of reform should include the DREAM Act. I have spoken about it on many occasions, and on many of those occasions I have presented to this body an individual story as I have, for example, about Solanlly Canas.

I brought her photograph with me today. She is a young woman of enormous promise who simply wants to stay in this country, and have a path to citizenship. Having been brought here at the age of 12, she didn't choose to come, she was brought here through no fault or doing of her own, and this is her country. This is where her friends are; this is the language she speaks. She lives in East Haven, Connecticut, where she attended school, and she has thrived there. She became a member of the National Honor Society. She is on the executive board of the student council. She is president of the Interact Club.

She was born in Colombia, but her roots are in America. She has dreams and goals for the future like any young woman her age, and she is proud of her connection, her roots in this country. She wants to go to college, but for so long has feared that she would not be able to go.

She is eligible to apply for the Deferred Action Program announced by the administration, but that program would simply give her a reprieve without the security and certainty that she needs to advance and continue her schooling. That is the path to citizenship that our Dreamers need and deserve so that they can go to school, serve in our military, give back to this country, and earn their citizenship through deeds—not just words, but deeds—that make us all proud, and contribute to the quality of life in our Nation.

That is what they want to do is to earn the citizenship that so many of us take for granted. So many people in this country have this as a birthright—without the effort that she will devote to becoming a U.S. citizen. We have great citizens born here who value and prize their citizenship. But Solanlly is one who deserves a path and the ability to earn it through her deeds and her accomplishments in school and afterwards.

On this Human Rights Day, I thank this body for giving me the honor of speaking about these issues. It is an extraordinary honor to say how much human rights mean in this country. We are the paragon of equality, freedom, and rights. We are the greatest Nation in the history of the world, and we are still a work in progress. We still have progress to make, and these three measures will help us to do it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to 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.

TRIBUTE TO BUDDY GUY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure today to recognize Buddy Guy, who was recently honored here in Washington at the Kennedy Center for his contribution to the arts.

George ''Buddy'' Guy was born in 1936 into a Louisiana sharecropper family. He first learned to play music on handmade instruments.

With no money, Guy moved to Chicago in 1957 at the peak of the Chicago's blues era. A stranger introduced him at Chicago's 708 Club, where he eventually landed a steady gig. He also played at other local venues, and eventually he signed a record deal. Chicago connected Guy with legendary artists and allowed him to play guitar with blues greats like Muddy Watters and Howlin' Wolf. However, it was not until his 1991 release of ''Damn Right, I've Got the Blues'' that his career started making national headlines. The album earned him his first Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Artist and five W.C. Handy awards.

After that, the awards started streaming in. He earned 5 more