

championship rodeo event in the United States, I, along with my fellow Nevadans, am proud that it has called the Silver State home for so many years.

The National Finals Rodeo was established in 1958 by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in order to determine the world champions in various events from bull riding to tie-down roping. First held in Dallas in 1959, the National Finals Rodeo was held in many different cities until 1984, when Las Vegas became its permanent home. An integral part of the Las Vegas community for 30 years, the National Finals Rodeo has brought more than 170,000 fans annually to see some of our Nation's toughest cowboys and cowgirls compete in 10 days of competition. This event has become a yearly tradition not only for Nevadans, but for people across the nation and the world. As rodeo lovers and horse enthusiasts, my wife Lynne and I were thrilled to attend this year's event.

The National Finals Rodeo offers Nevadans and rodeo goers nationwide a place to truly experience the gritty, energetic entertainment the Wild West is best known for. In one of the hardest hit regions during the recession, this event plays an integral role in Nevada's tourism economy. Tourism continues to be a prominent economic driver within the Silver State, and I am thrilled to learn this event will be a part of the Las Vegas community through 2024.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in recognizing the National Finals Rodeo, a special event that has proudly called Las Vegas home for the past 30 years, and I would like to offer the best of luck to all who are participating in this year's events.●

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN KROLICKI

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I wish to congratulate Lieutenant Governor Brian Krolicki, of Stateline, for his decades of service to the State of Nevada. After most recently serving as Nevada's lieutenant governor for 8 years, he will be retiring on January 5, 2015. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate my friend and colleague on his 24 years of hard work and dedication to the Silver State.

While serving as Nevada's Secretary of State, I came to know Lieutenant Governor Krolicki not only as a trusted colleague, but also as a dear friend. While attending Stanford University, Lieutenant Governor Krolicki fell in love with Lake Tahoe, NV. After earning a bachelor's degree in political science, he moved to Nevada. While maintaining his Silver State residence, he went on to become an investment banker in New York City and San Francisco. Lieutenant Governor Krolicki's public service career began in 1990 when he was tapped to serve as chief deputy treasurer to then-State treasurer Bob Seale. His many years of financial experience made him an ideal

candidate for State treasurer after the retirement of Treasurer Seale. Upon being sworn in as treasurer in 1999, he began to tirelessly devote his efforts to the people of Nevada. He created the Nevada college savings plans, and was responsible for the successful rollout and administration of the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship. Under his leadership, Nevada saw its first upgrade in credit ratings in nearly 30 years.

After serving 8 years as treasurer, he sought the lieutenant governorship in 2006 and won by a sizeable margin. During Lieutenant Governor Krolicki's two terms of service, he has ably focused on advancing the Silver State's tourism industry all over the Nation and around the globe. Lieutenant Governor Krolicki has served as chairman of the Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition since 2006, and is actively fighting for northern Nevada to host the 2026 Olympic Games. This year, my wife Lynne and I were honored to participate in Nevada's 150th anniversary celebrations. As chairman of the Nevada Sesquicentennial Commission that successfully carried out over 500 events, Lieutenant Governor Krolicki has once more shown his dedication to the State of Nevada.

As a devoted husband and proud father to three girls, Lieutenant Governor Krolicki stands as a shining example of someone who has dedicated his life to serving his community. I am grateful for his dedication and commitment to the people of the State of Nevada. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and community service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. Today, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in thanking Lieutenant Governor Krolicki for his service to the Silver State and I offer my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada an even better place. I offer my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. THOMAS WELCH

● Mr. KING. Madam President, I wish to honor the career of a dear friend and former colleague, Mr. Thomas Welch, who is set to retire this year as Chairman of the Maine Public Utilities Commission. Tom's tremendous 35-year career bridged both the public and private sectors and has always been defined by a steadfast dedication to service and, of course, an unwavering love for the State of Maine.

As Governor, I had the privilege of calling on Tom to lead the Maine Public Utilities Commission, also known as the MPUC, and that is the same position that he was again nominated for and currently holds under Governor Paul LePage.

Serving as Chairman of the MPUC is, at times, a thankless job, but it is also one of monumental importance. Tom's job is central to keeping the lights on, the water flowing, the heat coming,

and the people of Maine connected through reliable phone and Internet services. In my administration—just as he does today—Tom performed those tasks and so much more with outstanding acumen, keen judgment, and, I might add, with one eye always towards the future. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that Tom, perhaps more than anyone else across the State, played a pivotal role in ushering Maine's public utilities into the 21st century.

A generation of Maine's young minds can thank Tom for laying the groundwork that hastened their journey into the digital age. Tom recognized early on that the Internet was quickly evolving into a more dynamic and powerful tool that, when placed in the hands of our students and our communities, could become a catalyst for digital learning, a driver of economic growth, and an architect of intra-personal connections that were no longer limited by geographic constraints. With that immense potential in mind, he worked tirelessly to implement the Federal E-Rate program, which delivered Internet access to schools and libraries across the State—and with that newfound Internet access, he delivered new and unprecedented opportunities to people all across Maine, an achievement so fundamental and so critical to our daily lives that it simply cannot be understated.

As high energy prices across Maine continued to weigh heavily on the pockets and minds of people across the State, Tom endeavored mightily to de-regulate Maine's electric industry to lower energy prices, and most recently, he led the charge to expand natural gas capacity throughout the region.

In conclusion, I should point out that I often to refer to Tom as "SMIM"—the Smartest Maine in Maine. He possesses a vast knowledge of law and public policy that is matched by very few and that has helped inform and shape Maine's telecommunications and energy framework for nearly a decade. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find an individual with a deeper understanding of our State's public utilities infrastructure. But perhaps more important is his genuine ability to teach and share that knowledge with others. These characteristics not only make Tom a remarkable public servant, but a valued role model as well.

I, of course, am saddened to see Tom enter retirement because his departure will be a loss for Maine—but, I, along with the people of Maine, am forever grateful for his many years of service on behalf of our state.

Tom, congratulations and thank you. I hope your retirement is as restful and relaxing as it is well-deserved.●

TRIBUTE TO KATHERINE GRANT-DAVIS

● Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I am honored to recognize Ms. Katherine Grant-Davis on the occasion of her retirement from the New Jersey Primary