

ABRAHAM LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE
NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Kentucky is proud to be the birthplace and boyhood home of one of our Nation's greatest Presidents, Abraham Lincoln. We commemorate this great man's humble origins with the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park, in Hodgenville, KY.

On July 17, 1916, this park site was donated to the American people and became part of the National Park Service, and so this year, we celebrate the centennial anniversary of this most historic and revered park being in the care of the American people.

At the center of the park stands the Memorial Building, constructed to commemorate the life and accomplishments of the 16th President of the United States. The Memorial Building—built before the iconic Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall here in the Nation's Capital—was the first Lincoln memorial built in America.

It was built by the American people, with over 100,000 citizens, young and old, both in the north and the south, donating sums as small as 25 cents. Fifty-six steps lead up to the building, representing the 56 years of Lincoln's life. The 16 windows symbolize Lincoln's status as the 16th President.

Inside the Memorial Building is the Symbolic Birth Cabin, a replica of the single-room log cabin Lincoln was born in on February 12, 1809. The original cabin that Lincoln was born in and lived in until age 2 was apparently dismantled sometime before 1865. The Symbolic Birth Cabin reminds us of the rural, hardscrabble life the future President faced on the Kentucky frontier, a life that would eventually take him to the Oval Office.

The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park also includes the Knob Creek site, the area where Lincoln lived from age 2 to the age of 7. Lincoln himself recalled that his earliest memories were of Knob Creek. Here, he helped his family with planting the garden, carrying water, and collecting wood for fires.

More than 200,000 people every year visit the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park in central Kentucky to see the origins of our leader and President. The park has received visitors from as far away as Mongolia, China, Russia, and Australia, among other places, who come to this tiny town to see proof that the ideals of America really are true, that even one born into the most modest means can rise to become a great nation's President.

I know my colleagues join me in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park. It is an important milestone to mark, both for Kentucky and our country, and the National Park Service will celebrate it later this month. The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park is a lasting tribute to Abraham Lincoln and to

how the Bluegrass State shaped and formed him.

For 100 years, the National Park Service has kept careful watch over this sacred ground. I want to congratulate and extend my gratitude to all those National Park Service employees and volunteers who have contributed to this important effort. Kentucky is proud of them, and we are proud to be the birthplace of America's 16th President. This park reminds us that one of our Nation's greatest leaders emerged from the hills of the Kentucky countryside.

TRIBUTE TO ALLEN GILBERT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize the achievements and contributions of a remarkable advocate and distinguished leader in my home State of Vermont.

This summer, Allen Gilbert will be stepping down from his position as executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont. For more than 12 years, Allen has inspired Vermonters and many others as an advocate for personal freedoms.

When Allen began at the ACLU-VT, the office had three staff members, only one of whom was full time. Under Allen's leadership, the office has grown to a staff of five, with two lawyers committed to the State's legislative activities. Allen has become widely known for expanding the work and visibility of the ACLU-VT. Those who have had the privilege of working with Allen cite his boundless wisdom and passion for civil liberties among his many notable qualities.

During his time with the ACLU-VT, Allen has been a champion of free speech, government transparency, and privacy rights, not just in Vermont but nationwide. I have long counted him as an ally in my own work. I was proud to invite him to testify before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in 2007 about the REAL ID Act. More recently, Allen's contributions were extremely helpful as I developed reforms to curtail government surveillance powers, culminating in the enactment of the USA FREEDOM Act of 2015. Allen and I have also worked together to end Federal vehicle checkpoints near White River Junction.

Among many successes, Allen is well-known in Vermont for his work on cases to protect students' rights to freedom of speech and political expression and the rights of the LGBT community. More recently, Allen and the ACLU-VT have worked to create more consistency among Vermont law enforcement agencies regarding the use of force. And Allen's work highlighting automated license plate readers, cell phone tracking devices, facial recognition technology, and the use of domestic drones has helped to educate Vermonters and its policymakers about the need to address these evolving technologies. In doing so, Allen has once again demonstrated his leadership in protecting Vermonters.

I am not alone in recognizing Allen's talents and tenacity. In 2012, the Vermont Press Association awarded him with the Matthew Lyon Award for his lifetime commitment to the First Amendment and protecting the public's right to know. The award is named after the Vermont Congressman who won reelection from jail in 1798, while serving time for violating the Sedition Act because he challenged the power of the Presidency. Matthew Lyon is considered one of our Nation's earliest free speech heroes.

Allen's commitment to freedom of speech and equality extends far past his 12 years at the ACLU-VT. In earlier years, Allen was a reporter and editor at the Rutland Herald and the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus. He also taught writing at a number of Vermont colleges and served as chair of the Worcester, VT, School Board while it supported a case for equal education opportunity. That 1997 Vermont Supreme Court case ultimately changed the way we fund public education in Vermont.

Although Allen is leaving ACLU-VT, I know he will remain a lifelong advocate for the freedoms and liberties we hold dear. As Allen has said, "There's a saying that civil liberties are never permanently won; you have to continue to fight for them constantly." He is an exemplary Vermonter, and I know he will continue that fight.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and 100 years of national parks.

Often called the land of "Great Faces, Great Places," South Dakota's differing landscapes and abundance of outdoor activities mean there is something for everyone to enjoy. As a result, spending time outside with our family and friends is one of our favorite pastimes.

This August marks the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. South Dakota is fortunate to be home to six national parks located throughout the State. Among them are the desolate but beautiful Badlands and one of our country's oldest national parks: Wind Cave. Jewel Cave in Custer, the Lewis & Clark Trail, the Minuteman Missile Site, and Mount Rushmore are all maintained by the National Park Service as well. The sixth national park, the Missouri River, cuts the State in half and provides energy and entertainment to people across the State. Few realize that a 100-mile stretch of the Missouri River is part of both the National Park System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The world's first national park, Yellowstone, was established by Congress in 1872, before Montana or Wyoming were official States. Following that, the Organic Act of 1916 created the National Park Service as an agency under

the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. The Organic Act was signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson on August 25, 1916. The purpose of the National Park Service was to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The National Park Service has continued to fulfill this mission for the past 100 years.

There is no better place to spend quality time with friends and family than the great outdoors of South Dakota, and there is no better time to celebrate the great outdoors than this year.

BOYCOTTING THE BDS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, last week we were reminded of the tragic history of the 20th century and the reemergence of the State of Israel from the embers of the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and the voice of the unconquerable human spirit, died.

Wiesel summed up his mission and what should be the driving creed of American Foreign Policy in 1986 when accepting the Nobel Peace Prize: “Whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation, take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.” On the cornerstone of the Holocaust Museum here in Washington are his words: “For the dead and the living, we must bear witness.”

Wiesel defended Soviet Jews, Cambodian refugees, the Kurds, and the victims of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. He was Israel’s most vocal supporter, although he was criticized by the left for his friendship with and support for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. When Mr. Netanyahu spoke to Congress last year, denouncing President Obama’s appeasement of the Iranian mullahs, Wiesel was the guest of honor.

Elie Wiesel’s passing comes at a time when the specter of anti-Semitism is gaining new life across the globe and sadly within the United States. On many campuses, including some in my State, we have seen the advancement of the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” Movement—an orchestrated campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel, shun Jewish academics, boycott Jewish goods, and disrupt Jewish commerce.

Israeli flags and books are burned on campuses in the United States and Western Europe, recalling the words of the German Jewish poet Heine, who warned that “where one first burns books, one then burns people.”

We have seen this all before, and we know where it can lead.

Formally launched a decade ago, BDS advocates divestment by companies with holdings in Israel and boycotts by academics and artists. In May

2013, Cambridge Physicist Stephen Hawking pulled out of a conference hosted by then Israeli President Shimon Peres. Strangely, Professor Hawking has been all too happy to pay visits to Iran and China and praise the tyrants who rule those countries.

Musicians Elvis Costello and Annie Lennox have refused to perform in Israel. It now makes news when a performer shows up in Israel. Two years ago, Sir Elton John courageously stood up to the mob and proudly shouted from an Israeli stage, “Shalom! We are so happy to be back here! Ain’t nothin’ gonna stop us from comin’, baby!”

Our own Department of Education has awarded millions of dollars to so-called Middle East Studies National Resource Centers, NRC, on 16 college campuses. According to published reports, fully half of the directors of these federally funded centers have called for support of the BDS Movement and six signed a letter calling for a boycott of Israeli universities and scholars. The open promotion of anti-Israeli boycotts by academic officers is a direct violation of Title VI of the Higher Education Opportunity Act and is an open assault on fundamental rights to freedom of association and expression.

BDS is not a typical act of political correctness, undertaken by radical academics whose usual prey is the youth of America. This is a worldwide movement designed to destroy the one democracy in the Middle East and the hopes of people who have occupied that land for over 3,000 years.

Indeed if the BDS Movement was isolated to a few tenured college outliers, that would be easy enough to handle. Unfortunately, it is not. Iran has pledged to wipe Israel off the map. It has tipped its missiles with the warning “Death to Israel” written on the cones in Hebrew. Hamas and Hezbollah shower missiles upon Israeli schools and villages. If Israel did not exist, the United Nations would go out of business. Last year, the General Assembly adopted 25 resolutions against particular countries; 22 were aimed at Israel—the others at Bashar Assad’s regime in Syria and Kim Jong-un’s prison state in North Korea. All of this for the 153rd largest country in the world, a place that is one four-hundredths the size of the United States.

Enough is enough. We can’t remain silent. As Elie Wiesel said, “we must bear witness.” The Obama administration must end its indifference. It must cut off and defund those organizations that promote the hate that fuels anti-Semitism. Standing up for Israel at home validates those fundamental principles of freedom enshrined in our Constitution.

I will close with the words of John F. Kennedy:

Israel was not created in order to disappear—Israel will endure and flourish. It is the child of hope and the home of the brave. It can neither be broken by adversity nor demoralized by success. It carries the shield of democracy and the sword of freedom.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS THALER

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, each year, Senator ENZI and I have the pleasure of introducing outstanding individuals who have been selected as inductees to the Wyoming Agriculture Hall of Fame for their invaluable contributions to agriculture and the Wyoming community. This year, Dennis Thaler, a third-generation Wyoming rancher, will be honored as one of these individuals during the 104th Wyoming State Fair.

Selection as a member of the Wyoming Agriculture Hall of Fame is not just about the quality of a calf crop or environmental improvements on the ranch, though both of these are important. This award also considers the involvement and dedication to the local communities that make Wyoming such a special place to live. I am happy to say that Dennis and his family embody the Western values that guide life in Wyoming. The Thalers raise crops like oats, millet, and wheat; run a cow-calf and yearling operation; and operate a backgrounding feedlot. Still, Dennis finds the time to be involved in the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and the National Cattleman’s Beef Association. The Thalers share their knowledge and experience with local students, fellow ranchers, and University of Wyoming researchers through the many field days, open houses, and workshops they host at their ranch. Dennis’s dedication to his community is evident in the high praise he receives from his family, neighbors, and his many agency partners.

Dennis has been described as a “leader,” a “mainstay,” and a “driving force” in his community. He has been recognized for both his innovative nature and his pursuit of an inclusive, well-rounded “teamwork approach” in making land management decisions. These characteristics make for both a hearty rancher and a healthy landscape. Dennis and his family were recognized for their hard work in 2006 when their ranch, the Thaler Land and Livestock Company, was selected to receive the Environmental Stewardship Award. The award considers management of water, air, soil, and wildlife resources, as well as the recipient’s leadership qualities and the business’s sustainability. Dennis and his family exceed expectations in each of these categories.

For nearly five decades, Dennis has been at the helm of his family ranch in southeast Wyoming. He and his family have worked to improve the land and water resources to ensure a future for livestock, wildlife, and the next generation. Together with his family, I have no doubt that Dennis will lead the Thaler Land and Livestock Company into the next 100 years with the same mind for growth and conservation the ranch has experienced since 1916.

I am honored to recognize this outstanding individual and his family. It