

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
 I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near,
 just round the corner.
 All is well.
 Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
 One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
 How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

• Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, since 2010, I have sponsored a State of the Union essay contest for Vermont students. The contest, now in its 7th year, is an opportunity for Vermont's high school students to articulate what issues they would prioritize if they were President of the United States. A panel of Vermont teachers reviewed all of the essays submitted and selected the top 20.

I would like to congratulate each and every finalist and to specifically acknowledge Quinn Nelson Mayo as this year's winner of the contest. I would also like to recognize Musa Mayange for placing second and A.J. DeFelice for placing third. I ask to have printed in the RECORD the winning essays.

The material follows:

QUINN NELSON MAYO, ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY
 JUNIOR (WINNER)

The United States was founded on several core values; the most important, as most of us agree, is freedom. This shared belief has been the foundation of our country for over 200 years. And for centuries, media has been a major outlet for people to exercise this freedom because it allows them to share their opinions with the masses. The idea of free speech took on a different meaning with the development of the internet in the late 80s. Since then, this liberty has grown exponentially. Now people have the ability to share their thoughts with a much larger audience. It is possible to do this anonymously and without fear of consequence. The internet is an incredible asset which has helped with globalization and the spread of information. However, this form of media does have its drawbacks. The leading issue is that it enables the spread of false information. So, while the internet embodies our nation's core value of freedom, it can also be detrimental to another vital aspect of our society: educated and well informed citizens.

Regardless of one's political views, we can all agree that 2016 has been a tumultuous year for politics, here in the United States and across the globe. The 2016 presidential campaign was a dramatic affair, and just the opening act to one of the most high-stakes elections in our country's history. The actions and rhetoric of the president-elect have inspired a great political shift, as well as a burgeoning sense of xenophobia and hatred throughout the country. During times such as these, it is important to focus on what we can do to create a better future. Much of the hate directed towards certain groups of people is due to ignorance and can be traced back to stereotypes perpetrated by unreliable media sources. Forcing media sites to drastically increase their censorship would rightfully anger their users, on the grounds

that it restricts their constitutional right to free speech. Therefore, the most plausible and effective solution to the problem of misinformation is to educate people.

As of this year, 78% of the United States population has a social media profile (Statista). Facebook and Twitter have billions of users across the world. It is imperative that we use such sites with care. The recent controversies over fake news have made the influence of the media on politics increasingly apparent. The rumor now known as "Pizzagate" is a prime example of a fake news story with tremendous influence. Millions of people believed that Hillary Clinton was involved in a child-prostitution ring run out of a pizza parlor. This is because, for a vast number of people, social media and biased news sources are their only ways of acquiring information. In fact, it is estimated that 62% of American adults use social media at least occasionally as a news source (Pew Research Center). However, many blindly make the assumption that it is accurate. When hundreds of thousands of people are susceptible to hate-driven fake news, it can have a huge impact on our democracy.

This is why I propose the incorporation of media literacy as a core subject in all public schools. Public schools educate the majority of our nation's children. Which is why, by teaching America's youth how to approach sources impartially and critically, we can fix this problem of misinformation. Integrating media literacy as a required course at elementary and high-school levels is an investment in our future generations.

MUSA MAYANGE, WINOOSKI HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR
 (SECOND PLACE)

Twelve years and still no change. After fleeing from a civil war in Somalia in 1992, my parents took refuge at a refugee camp in Kakuma, Kenya. After 12 years of struggle, in 2004 we flew from the National Airport of Kenya to J.F.K. International Airport in New York thinking our lives were saved. Finally here, the land of the free and the home of the brave. One of the only places on earth where you can taste opportunity and smell a second chance. At the age of 17, I can see it now. America's resistance to change.

Racism exists in America. Surveys reveal that whites apply stereotypical thinking about blacks, considering them lazy and unintelligent. What are we going to do about these attitudes towards persons of color?

The American National Election Studies asked voters to rank blacks and whites from hardworking to lazy, from intelligent to unintelligent. In 2012, 62 percent of whites gave blacks a lower score in at least one area. In 2008, 45 percent of whites expressed negative feelings about black stereotypes. (Milbank, Washington Post)

For a while, we thought that the issue of racism was over and that our nation was going to move forward and "leave the past in the past." It almost had me fooled because we live in Vermont and we sometimes can be isolated from world issues. But racism is still here. When everyone thought that it was no longer "relevant," it's still alive.

As a young African-American immigrant, how can I wrap my head around this? As Vermonters how can we annihilate racism and get our community to be accepting of all races, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds?

Ta-Nehisi Coates addresses the disadvantages of living with black skin in *Between the World and Me*. Coates says "... today, when 8% of the world's prisoners are black men, our race has been refinanced to the Dream of being white. Black life is cheap, but in America, black bodies are a natural resource of incomparable value." Black people are born with a disadvantage. We are more likely to go jail than white people. The

Center for American Progress says, "In the United States, black people account for 60 percent of those imprisoned. The prison population grew by 700 percent from 1970 to 2005, a rate that is outpacing crime and population rates."

Black people make up 17% of the United States population yet more of us are in jail. A black man is twice as likely to go to jail than a white man, even if they did the same crime.

Racism was born when humans identified skin color as a positive or negative factor. If each of us could accept that we are all humans, we come from different places, and have different interests, we could accept racial differences, but not let them divide us. We will never move forward if we don't work together side by side and knock down obstacles.

AJ DEFELICE, HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL
 FRESHMAN (THIRD PLACE)

The United States is one of the greatest countries on Earth, prized for its natural beauty, economic opportunities, and democratic principles. However, many challenges face our nation. Among the most pressing issues are climate change, immigration, and income inequality.

Perhaps the most daunting problem we face is climate change, and the crucial role our country plays in it. Although President Obama recently signed the Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions, much must still be done to combat this issue. We can begin by putting unemployed or low-income Americans to work—manufacturing, transporting, and installing renewable energy products—such as solar panels, wind turbines, and more. This would produce a similar effect as the New Deal put into place by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to combat the negative effects of the Great Depression. Additionally, a carbon tax should be established nationally, to lower emissions, and encourage the usage of renewable energy. A carbon tax would also allow for tax reductions in other areas, and combined with employing Americans to transition to widespread renewable energy, would create economic growth, while simultaneously reducing our carbon footprint.

Another controversial issue which troubles our nation is immigration. The United States is a country built on the backs of immigrants, and to deny a path to citizenship to millions who long only for a higher quality of life is unpatriotic. We must stop dehumanizing these people and see them only for who they are—people. Immigrants strengthen our economy, whether it be as producers, consumers, or developers. To deny them access to citizenship in our nation would be depriving ourselves of economic growth and cultural diversity. Economic and cultural change that would only strengthen American society.

Income inequality is another issue which plagues our nation today. According to countless years of research, income inequality has a direct correlation on social and health issues. A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin found that people who reside in more financially unequal communities are more likely to die before the age of 75. As national income inequality decreases, so do social and health problems. This decline can be seen in Scandinavian countries, where having a more equal gross domestic product per capita results in a higher quality of life. To make this possible for the United States, corporations must be regulated and held accountable by lawmakers to be sure that the American people are receiving the representation they deserve. As citizens, we must be responsible in electing officials who will place the needs of the greater population

above the interests of wealthy corporate executives.

Our nation is at a turning point in its history, and the choices we make today will have lasting effects on future generations.

The United States of America will remain a strong, respected, and prosperous nation if we are able to look past our disagreements and focus on making progress through compromise. We must act wisely, and keep our eyes on what is most important—the liberty we treasure as our nation's crowning promise.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on January 19, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. UPTON) had signed the following enrolled bills:

H.R. 39. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to codify the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 72. An act to ensure the Government Accountability Office has adequate access to information.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the enrolled bills were signed on January 19, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on January 19, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 84. An act to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointment of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the enrolled bill was signed on January 19, 2017, during the adjournment of the Senate by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 2 of the Civil Rights Commission Amendments Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 1975), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, and upon recommendation of the Minority Leader, the Speaker reappoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Commission on Civil Rights for a term expiring December 15, 2022: Mr. Michael Yaki of San Francisco, California.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 2(a) of the National Cultural Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h(a)), amended by Public Law 107-117, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Mr. Kennedy of Massachusetts.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 4(a) of the John F. Kennedy Centennial Commission Act (Public Law 114-215), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the John F. Kennedy Centennial Commission: Mr. McCarthy of California and Ms. Stefanik of New York.

The message further announced that pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the revised statutes (20 U.S.C. 42-43), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: Ms. Matsui of California.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, January 20, 2017, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 84. An act to provide for an exception to a limitation against appointments of persons as Secretary of Defense within seven years of relief from active duty as a regular commissioned officer of the Armed Forces.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BURR, from the Select Committee on Intelligence, without amendment:

S. 133. A bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-2).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEE:

S. 177. A bill to provide for congressional review of the imposition of duties and other trade measures by the executive branch, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BENNET, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 178. A bill to prevent elder abuse and exploitation and improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. COTTON, Mr. ENZI, Mr. LEE, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 179. A bill to expand the use of E-Verify, to hold employers accountable, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 180. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reform and reduce fraud and abuse in certain visa programs for aliens working temporarily in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 181. A bill to ensure that certain Federal public works and infrastructure projects use materials produced in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 182. A bill to provide for the inclusion of court-appointed guardianship improvement and oversight activities under the Elder Justice Act of 2009; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. LEE):

S. 183. A bill to allow for expedited approval of generic prescription drugs and temporary importation of prescription drugs in the case of noncompetitive drug markets and drug shortages; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. LEE, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MORAN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CORKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SASSE, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 184. A bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. COONS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, and Ms. WARREN):

S.J. Res. 6. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women; to the Committee on the Judiciary.