

and objectives to Congress, senior defense leaders, and the American public, earning the respect of both her superiors and peers.

I ask that you and our colleagues join me, as well as Major General Nichols' family, many friends, and peers in saluting this distinguished officer's many contributions and sacrifices in the defense of our great Nation. It is fitting that today we publicly recognize her service and wish her health, happiness, and success in the years to come. Congratulations, Major General Nichols, on completing an exceptional and exemplary career.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL FRANK VAVALA

• Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise today on behalf of Delaware's congressional delegation—Senator CHRIS COONS, Congresswoman LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER and myself—to honor the exemplary service of MG Frank Vavala, the adjutant general for Delaware for the past 18 years. As Governor of Delaware, I had the distinct pleasure of nominating him to serve as Adjutant General in February 1999, and I believe to this day it is one of the best appointments I have ever made. Over the past 17 years, General Vavala has been responsible for the mission readiness of all Delaware National Guard units for both Federal and State missions. He served as a cabinet member and trusted military adviser to me when I was Governor, as well as to the three Governors who succeeded me: Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Governor Jack Markell, and Governor John Carney. In January 2017, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general Delaware, becoming the first three-star general to lead the Delaware National Guard.

During General Vavala's tenure, the Delaware National Guard has deployed close to 11,000 soldiers and airmen to support our State and country. Nearly half of them were deployed abroad to Bosnia, South America, Africa, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan, among other countries. Once in theater, these men and women accomplished almost every mission imaginable. They ran entry control points, provided security, established and maintained communications and conducted medical evacuation from the battlefield. They also transported supplies, patients, personnel, and dignitaries in both UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and C-130 aircraft. Back at home, the Delaware Guard activated nearly 5,000 soldiers and airmen to provide support during 11 snowstorms, 8 hurricanes—including Hurricane Katrina, where hundreds of Delawareans went to help in Mississippi and Louisiana just 24 hours after the devastating storm made landfall, 1 tornado, dozens of floods, Noreasters, and

three Presidential inaugurations. General Vavala oversaw all operations as soldiers and airmen helped transport emergency workers and patients, evacuate flooded areas, get residents to shelter, safety, and medical assistance, and even set up emergency communications around the state.

Like many successful leaders, General Vavala did not keep regular office hours. He routinely came to work early, stayed late, and worked on weekends. He was known for taking the time to recognize, thank, console, and care for everyone under his command from the newest private to the most senior officer. He valued every person who wore the uniform equally. I have met Guard men and women for years who say that when they were in a time of need, General Vavala was there for them, even if it was just taking time to drop them an email or note. Sometimes they wondered how he found out about what was going on in their lives, but however he did it, he found out. He prioritized his soldiers and airmen over his own career. Instead of focusing the spotlight on his individual accomplishments, General Vavala put the focus on his soldiers and airmen, and it made his career a success by default.

In addition to holding dozens of leadership positions in the Delaware Guard, General Vavala held prominent national positions as president of the Adjutants General Association of the United States and chairman of the board of the National Guard Association of the United States, NGAUS. During his tenure as chairman of the board, NGAUS was the main driver responsible for passing one of the most significant pieces of military legislation in a generation—the National Guard Empowerment Act. General Vavala provided key testimony before the House Armed Services Committee and was instrumental in advocating for the passage of this important legislation. In January 2012, Delaware's 146th General Assembly passed H.J. Res. 10, recognizing General Vavala for his leading role in helping to reshape the U.S. military.

General Vavala is from a proud military family, having served with both his father, COL Frank P. Vavala, and brother MSG Gerard P. Vavala. Before serving as Adjutant General, he worked full time for the DuPont Company, where he was employed as marketing services supervisor for 31 years. He has been honored with the Anthony of Padua Founders' Award and the Italian-American Man of the Year Award. He also cares about his community, organizing food drives for the Food Bank of Delaware, and he is a person of deep faith who takes seriously what the Bible tells us about caring for others and focused that into his career as Adjutant General.

I believe General Vavala has been successful in no small part because he possesses some of the finest leadership qualities that I have ever observed in a military leader. Frank Vavala under-

stands that leaders are humble, not haughty. They have the heart of a servant. They understand that their role is to serve, not be served. General Vavala leads by example. It is not do as I say, but do as I do. He knows that the best leaders aren't afraid to keep out of step when everyone else is marching to the wrong tune. Leaders unite, not divide. They build bridges not walls. They are aspirational—purveyors of hope, if you will—and they appeal to our better angels. Like the very best leaders, Frank has always sought to do what is right, not what is easy or expedient. He embraces the Golden Rule and treats other people the way he would want to be treated. General Vavala surrounds himself with the best people he can find. When his team does well, he gives the credit to them. And when the team falls short of the mark, this leader takes the blame. Finally, when General Frank Vavala knows he is right, he never gives up. As a leader, General Frank Vavala is in a class of his own, and he is one whom other leaders, both civilian and military would do well to emulate.

On behalf of Senator COONS and Congresswoman BLUNT ROCHESTER, let me wholeheartedly thank General Vavala for his service to our country and our State. The leadership and commitment he modeled helped keep Delaware and our Nation more safe and secure. Today, we are honored to be able to offer General Vavala our sincere congratulations on a job well done. From our hearts, we wish him and his wife Jane, who he has been married to for 50 years—along with their children Anne, Jane, and Nick and their three granddaughters—many happy, healthy, and successful years to come. Bravo Zulu.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 4 of the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-196), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the United States Semiquincentennial Commission: Mr. MEEHAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. ADERHOLT of Alabama, and from private life: Mr. Jim Koch of Newton, Massachusetts, Mr. Val Crofts of Milton, Wisconsin, Dr. Wilfred McClay of Norman, Oklahoma, and Mrs. Lynn Young of Rockdale, Texas.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 161(a) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2211), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives as Congressional Advisors on Trade Policy and Negotiations: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. REICHERT of Washington, and Mr. NUNES of California.

The message further announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h and the