

The Order of the Elks has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving our county's veterans. The Elks are deeply engaged in the Veterans Affairs medical facilities by providing support and friendship to veterans at VA facilities. Furthermore, the Elks answered the call of the Department of Veterans Affairs to better address veteran homelessness by founding the Welcome Home Program.

Providing mentorship and instilling good character and moral values in our country's youth is another important facet of the Elk's mission. Our youth are the leaders of tomorrow, and the Elks are committed to helping them succeed by supporting scholarships that allow more children to pursue their dreams. Further, the order educates parents and their children about the dangers of using illegal substances, tobacco products, alcohol, and abusing prescription drugs. These prevention and awareness programs help give young people the tools and information they need to make good decisions when faced with negative social pressures.

I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to join me in recognizing and congratulating the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks on its 150th anniversary. The Order of the Elks has been and will continue to be a shining example of honor and service to neighbor, community, and nation.●

#### TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL RUBIN

● Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today, I pay tribute to Rhode Island's assistant attorney general Michael Rubin, who will retire this year after serving our State for more than three decades. I had the pleasure of working alongside Mike during my time as attorney general and during my time on the attorney general office staff. I am proud to call him my friend. He is a skilled leader in the Rhode Island legal community. He will be missed.

Mike piled up a strong record of accomplishments during his time as the assistant attorney general of Rhode Island and chief of the Rhode Island Attorney General's environmental unit. He was an advocate for every community in the State and worked every day to promote a safe, clean environment for our kids and preserve public access to our beautiful shores. Just this past year, Save the Bay Rhode Island awarded Mike with its Environmental Achievement Award for his important work as the head of the environmental unit. "Without the efforts of advocates such as Mike, who tirelessly work not only for the good of the environment, but for our ability as a citizenry to access and enjoy our coastline, the quality, and in some cases, quantity, of publicly accessible coastal lands and waters would be significantly depreciated," the organization announced.

I got to see his determination firsthand when I was attorney general. In 2001, Mike had been trial counsel in the State proceedings when I argued a case

to defend our State's environmental preservation regulations before the Supreme Court. More recently, Mike helped file lawsuits in 2016 against dozens of big oil companies over the hazardous messes they were making in Rhode Island wells and reservoirs and pursued \$65 million for the cleanup.

In addition to his good work in the attorney general's office, Mike has contributed a great deal to our community. I know he will remain a committed leader in our State. I wish him health and much happiness in his days to come. Here is to less time writing briefs and more time enjoying Rhode Island's natural beauty, whether that be on your bike, in your kayak, or on your ice-skates.

On behalf of all Rhode Islanders, thank you for your work, Mike. You have made our State proud. Godspeed.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Cuccia, 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.)

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:24 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3299. An act to amend the Revised Statutes, the Home Owners' Loan Act, the Federal Credit Union Act, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to require the rate of interest on certain loans remain unchanged after transfer of the loan, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3542. An act to impose sanctions against Hamas for violating universally applicable international laws of armed conflict by intentionally using civilians and civilian property to shield military objectives from lawful attack, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3978. An act to amend the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify requirements related to mortgage disclosures, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 103. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3299. An act to amend the Revised Statutes, the Home Owners' Loan Act, the Federal Credit Union Act, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to require the rate of interest on certain loans remain unchanged after transfer of the loan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3542. An act to impose sanctions against Hamas for violating universally applicable international laws of armed conflict by intentionally using civilians and civilian property to shield military objectives from lawful attack, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 3978. An act to amend the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify requirements related to mortgage disclosures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4336. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's proposed fiscal year 2019 Budget and Performance Plan; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4337. A communication from the Acting Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bureau's strategic plan for fiscal years 2018-2022; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-4338. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Emergency Preparedness and Operations Reliability Standards" (Docket No. RM11-12-000; Order No. 840) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 13, 2018; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4339. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Modified Safe Harbor for Deteriorating Concrete Foundations Caused by the Mineral Pyrrhotite" (Rev. Proc. 2018-14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 13, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4340. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Exemption Application Rules for Corporate Restructurings" (Rev. Proc. 2018-15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 13, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4341. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Qualified Opportunity Zones Designation Procedures" (Rev. Proc. 2018-16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 13, 2018; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-4342. A communication from the Executive Analyst (Political), Department of