

Stabenow	Van Hollen	Whitehouse
Tester	Warner	Wyden
Udall	Warren	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Duckworth	McCain
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 47. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of John F. Ring, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2022.

(Mr. HOEVEN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Washington.

EQUAL PAY DAY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today for two reasons. Before discussing the nomination at hand—John Ring for the National Labor Relations Board—I do want to take a couple of minutes to mark Equal Pay Day.

Today, it takes women more than 3 additional months to make what their male colleagues made in 2017. In the 21st century, there is absolutely no excuse for the reality that women are still being paid less than men for the same work. It is wrong, it is harmful, and it has to change.

What is even more unacceptable is that for women of color, the pay gap is even worse. African-American women, working full time, only make 63 cents for every dollar their White male colleagues make, and on average, Latinas earn 54 cents for every dollar their White male colleagues make.

The wage gap doesn't hurt just women; it hurts families and our economy. Women are actually the sole or cobreadwinner in two-thirds of families with children. Families increasingly rely on women's wages to help make ends meet—to buy groceries, pay the bills, or pay for childcare.

In order to help women and all working families get ahead, I am very proud to be a sponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act. The Paycheck Fairness Act provides transparency and support for women who are being paid less than their male colleagues. It protects women from retaliation for discussing salary information with their coworkers, it allows women to join together in class action lawsuits, and it prohibits employers from seeking salary history, so the cycle of pay discrimination cannot continue.

As President Trump now continues to roll back worker protections and prioritize corporate profits over working families' wages, I think it is time for Congress to act and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act because workers do deserve to be paid fairly, end of story, no matter their gender.

Mr. President, I want to turn to the nomination before the Senate today,

the nomination of John Ring for the National Labor Relations Board.

First, I have to object to the unprecedented nature in which we are jamming this nominee through.

It is standard practice that Board nominees are always confirmed in pairs—one Democrat and one Republican. We do this to keep the Board as fair and balanced as possible in hopes that workers have a fair hearing when corporations violate their rights or bargain in bad faith, because the Board is the only place to which workers can turn to enforce their rights under the National Labor Relations Act. Workers cannot sue in court. So I must ask, why is this nominee being forced through without also filling the Democratic seat that is about to be vacated, especially at a time when so many other nominees have been waiting significantly longer—some more than 6 months—to be confirmed? I have to believe that it is because special corporate interests are putting immense pressure on my colleagues across the aisle to confirm someone who will advocate for corporations, no matter the cost to workers.

Right now, the Board's credibility is damaged because another Trump-appointed Board member, William Emanuel, chose to cast aside his ethics pledge and commitment to me by participating in Board actions that would directly benefit his former employer. Because of those actions, Mr. Emanuel—the Board's independent watchdog—opened an investigation, and because there was a clear conflict of interest, the Board was forced to vacate the decision that overruled Obama-era worker protections.

With a cloud of ethics controversies surrounding the current Board members, it is clear to me why corporations and special interests are trying to get Mr. Ring confirmed so quickly. Mr. Ring has spent his career as a corporate lawyer representing the interests of companies, not workers. He has opposed the Board's reforms that stop companies from unnecessarily delaying union elections. He has encouraged the Board to undermine long-established rights, including the right for workers to have coworker representation in disciplinary interviews. I find it difficult to believe he will advocate now for workers, as this Board desperately needs to be doing.

This administration has spent more than a year undermining workers' rights and making it easier for corporations to take advantage of them, and the Board, under Republican control, has been leading that charge by ignoring longstanding practices in a rush to overturn precedents that protect workers.

At a time when corporations in this country and the richest among us are getting richer and working families are left behind, it is so critical today that the Board be independent and able to advocate for workers. Now is not the time to break precedent and vote on a nominee without the Democratic pair.

For all these reasons, I will be voting no on this nominee. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. JOHNSON assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of Senator BROWN's remarks I be recognized for my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, thank you.

I thank the Senator from Rhode Island, who has been a great advocate for moving this country forward on everything from campaign finance rules to labor, to justice, and to keeping our planet as clean as possible.

During his campaign, Candidate Trump made a lot of big promises to workers in Ohio and across the country. He told them he would put American workers first, but too often the people he has put in charge have a record of doing exactly the opposite. That is certainly true of the two nominees to the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board whom we will consider this week, Patrick Pizzella and John Ring.

Think about this. They have spent their careers working to strip workers of their rights, defending corporations that are accused of mistreating workers, and trying to undermine collective bargaining rights.

Mr. Pizzella worked for disgraced former lobbyist and convicted felon, Jack Abramoff. They worked on the same lobbying team at the law firm of Preston Gates, trying to keep workers from being protected by Federal labor laws. These are the candidates the President of the United States, who talked about empowering workers and being on the side of workers, has nominated, one for the Department of Labor and one for the National Labor Relations Board. They have been busy through their professional careers—and very well paid doing it—trying to keep workers from being protected by Federal labor laws.

I know everyone is entitled to representation, but when you devote your life to keeping workers from having collective bargaining, keeping workers from working in a safe workplace, and defending companies who are accused of mistreating workers, it makes you wonder.

Mr. Pizzella also previously served at the Department of Labor, but his record there gives us no reason to rehire him at the Department of Labor. He worked at the Wage and Hour Division. He was supposed to look out for workers being cheated by their bosses out of the paychecks they had earned.

All over my State, from Cleveland to Cincinnati, from Ashtabula to Lima, from Marietta to Bryan and Toledo, I

hear stories of workers who simply couldn't fight back when their employers would occasionally cheat them out of a paycheck or overtime or misclassify them. We know most employers don't do that, but we know it happens with some regularity in communities all over my State and all over our country. That is why it is so important to have someone at the Department of Labor who looks out for the worker who doesn't often have a strong voice, as opposed to always siding with the employer on every issue.

Instead, an independent review by the Government Accountability Office found that when he was in his Department, the Wage and Hour Division was ineffective and actually discouraged workers from lodging complaints to get their hard-earned money back. So when a worker felt that he or she was cheated in the workplace, when Mr. Pizzella was in the Wage and Hour Division, those workers were reluctant to lodge complaints to get their money back because the Department of Labor was not on their side in those days.

This is the man who wants to be Deputy Secretary of Labor. He would be the second highest ranking official in charge of looking out for working men and women. His record indicates he would be more interested in looking out for corporations that want to take advantage of their workers. Isn't there enough of that in this country without the government siding with the richest, most privileged people in the country, the large corporations in the country against workers who simply don't have much of a voice? We are going to put government on the side of those corporations against those workers.

John Ring's nomination to the NLRB may be even worse. He has been nominated to be on the National Labor Relations Board. He is supposed to be a neutral arbiter between workers and management. He has spent his career representing employers. He has attacked the agency he is seeking to join. So much is at stake with this nomination. It will likely result in a 3-to-2 anti-worker and anti-labor majority on a board that has enormous influence over American workers. It will mean big advances in the decades-long campaign to chip away at workers' power in the workplace.

We need someone in both of these jobs—Mr. Pizzella at the Department of Labor and Mr. Ring at the NLRB—who wakes up every day thinking: How do I help American workers? How do I help American workers have a safer workplace? How do I help American workers get paid fairly? How do we make sure companies do the right thing as they treat their workers? That is what they should wake up every day thinking. Instead, President Trump has nominated and is hiring two people who have spent their careers trying to push those workers down. What these folks don't seem to understand is that it is not corporations that drive the economy; it is workers.

There is a problem in this institution. The leaders in this institution—the majority leader down the hall, Senator MCCONNELL—think you grow the economy from the top down. They think you give the richest people in the country tax cuts, you give the largest corporations in the country tax breaks, and it will trickle down and help workers.

No, that is not how you grow the economy. You grow the economy from the middle out. That is why we had greater job growth with President Obama after the auto rescue in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. More jobs were created in almost every one of those years than in 2017—President Trump's first year in office.

If work isn't valued, if corporations shortchange workers with the help of lawyers like Mr. Ring and Mr. Pizzella, then Americans can't earn their way to a better life for their families, no matter how hard they work.

In my hometown of Mansfield or where Connie and I live in Cleveland or in Cranston, RI—Senator WHITEHOUSE's hometown, where my daughter and son-in-law and two grandchildren live—how many times do I hear people in these communities say: You know, I am working harder than ever, and I have less to show for it.

President Trump is going to put two lawyers in key places in the Federal Government who are going to stack the deck even more against those workers. The last thing we need is more people serving in Washington who don't value work and who don't respect the Americans who do it.

I urge my colleagues to listen a little more to the Americans we serve. As President Lincoln said: Go out and get your public opinion bath. Listen to workers—not just employers, not just lawyers, not just to country clubs. Go to where workers hang out. Listen a little more to the workers we serve and a little less to big corporations, which it seems these days are trying to squeeze every last penny out of their workers.

Mr. President, reject these nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here on the floor for my 202nd "Time to Wake Up" speech. I would like to begin by thanking this body for the passing of the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund as part of the measure that Republicans and Democrats agreed to before the recent recess. The Presiding Officer obviously represents an extremely coastal State. I represent Rhode Island, a very coastal State. This new program will provide resources for the communities along our shores to be able to deal with the threats they are seeing from sea level rise, fisheries moving about, worsening offshore storms, tides that now come ashore on bright sunny days, and the various hazards that they must

undertake so that they are not left alone trying to address them.

I often use these speeches to explore why it is that we get nothing done in Congress on climate. I point out that the major reason is the insidious fossil-fuel-funded web of climate change denial, with a parallel lobbying and electioneering effort.

I point out that this network is funded by the fossil fuel industry in a deliberate and systematic effort to misdirect public discussion and to distort public understanding of climate change and climate science.

I point out that it is actually working. It has been so effective at infiltrating our political system that the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is a full-on fossil fuel flunky. I discuss the fossil fuel industry's parallel web that directs rivers of dark money into our political system and deploys related, but more clandestine, threats and promises to work the industry's will in Congress.

Like I said, it is working. The web of denial and political enforcement organizations has so far achieved its purpose: to prevent Congress from carrying out its responsibility to rein in carbon pollution. We are, as a result, failing to protect the American people and our economy from the effects of that pollution, particularly our coastal economies. But now agriculture and other economies are feeling it too, and Congress is still doing nothing.

So this secretive and insidious apparatus deserves our attention. Nowadays, this apparatus is dedicated to denying science, confusing the public, and holding a political whip hand over Congress on the issue of climate change. Nowadays, it does this to protect the fossil fuel industry from responsibility for its pollution. But it is actually not a new enterprise.

We have never seen this machinery operating at this scale before. It is bigger and more multifaceted than ever, but we have seen its tricks before. The science denial playbook, commissioned by the Koch brothers, ExxonMobil, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to stymie climate action, is the same doubt-mongering playbook we have seen used by Big Tobacco, by chemical industries, and by other corporate polluters for decades.

I am not the only one who has noticed. A lot of work has examined this denial apparatus—how it is funded, how it hides its funding, how it communicates, and how it propagates the denial message. This is valuable work because the better America understands the mechanisms of this deceitful operation, the better America can inoculate itself against that deceit.

So I have brought some of this work with me to the Senate floor today. It is kind of a beginner's bibliography of this apparatus.

I will start with a book called "Deceit and Denial," and, on the cover, described by Bill Moyers as "the best detective story I've read in years." This

book is written by Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, who have been tracking the efforts of industry to hide scientific facts about pollution for a long time. They point out in their introduction here:

Some industries . . . have reassured the public that their products are benign by controlling research and manipulating science. Throughout much of the twentieth century, most scientific studies of the health effects of toxic substances have been done by researchers in the employ of industry or in universities with financial ties to members of that industry. At times their results were subject to review by industry; if the results indicated a problem, the information was suppressed.

This goes way back into the annals of denial.

My next book is "Poison Tea." It is a book written by Jeff Nesbit. It goes back into the tobacco documents that were protected in the tobacco settlement. The attorneys general demanded that the documents of the tobacco companies be set aside as a permanent reference. Jeff Nesbit was present at some of the efforts to create the tobacco industry version of climate denial. He saw it happening up close. He was in some of the meetings. In chapter 25, he opens up with this:

If the 14 million internal tobacco industry memos and documents show one thing clearly, it is this: political campaign networks built to defend and promote large corporate interests with integrated goals, messaging, targets, and allies simply don't materialize overnight. The funding and strategies behind them take years to develop before reaching maturity. And they build on each other over time.

I turn now to "Doubt is Their Product." This is David Michaels' book. The subtitle is "How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health."

The quotation I have selected moves from the general principle of science denial on behalf of industries into global warming as this scheme moved forward:

Take global warming. The vast majority of climate scientists believe there is adequate evidence of global warming to justify immediate intervention to reduce the human contribution.

Now, this was written, just to be clear, in 2008, a decade ago—a decade ago:

The vast majority of climate scientists believe there is adequate evidence global warming to justify immediate intervention to reduce the human contribution. They understand that waiting for absolute certainty is far riskier—and potentially far more expensive—than acting responsibly now—

That is, 10 years ago—

to control the causes of climate change. Opponents of action, led by the fossil fuels industry, delayed this policy debate—

And for another decade—

by challenging the science with a classic uncertainty campaign.

He cites what he calls a cynical memo that Republican political consultant Frank Luntz delivered to his clients in early 2003, saying:

The scientific debate is closing [against us] but not yet closed. There is still a window of opportunity to challenge the science.

Luntz understood that his clients can oppose (and delay) regulation . . . by simply manufacturing uncertainty. Doubt is their product.

The next book is by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, entitled "Merchants of Doubt," which was actually made into a film as well. They have done a lot of work in this area.

Here is the conclusion:

Doubt-mongering works because we think science is about facts—cold, hard, definite facts.

This is a mistake. There are always uncertainties in any live science because science is a process of discovery.

Doubt is crucial to science . . . but it also makes science vulnerable to misrepresentation, because it is easy to take uncertainties out of context and create the impression that everything is unresolved. This was the tobacco industry's key insight: That you could use normal scientific uncertainty to undermine the status of actual scientific knowledge.

"Doubt is our product," ran the infamous memo written by one tobacco industry executive in 1969.

"Merchants of Doubt" goes on to describe how that exact same technique—and many of the same individuals and organizations—carried that over from tobacco smoke to global warming. Subtitle: "How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming."

This is a book by Pulitzer Prize winning author Steve Coll. He is actually speaking tonight at the Library of Congress. This book is called "Private Empire: ExxonMobil and American Power." It describes the mischief that Exxon got up to in pursuing its political goals here in Washington. He describes the underlying structure of Washington policy debates. He calls it a "kaleidoscope of overlapping and competing influence campaigns, some open, some conducted by front organizations, and some entirely clandestine."

Obviously, if you are ExxonMobil, you don't want your name on all of this stuff—hence, the "kaleidoscope of overlapping and competing influence campaigns, some open, some conducted by front organizations, and some entirely clandestine."

He continues:

Strategists created layers of disguise, subtlety, and subterfuge—corporate-funded "grassroots" programs and purpose-built think tanks, as fingerprint-free as possible. In such an opaque and untrustworthy atmosphere, the ultimate advantage lay with any lobbyist whose goal was to manufacture confusion and perpetual controversy. On climate, this happened to be the oil industry's position.

In his book "The War on Science," Shawn Otto goes in some detail through the scheming that backs up what he calls "a steady stream of pseudoscience that can be used by foot soldiers to sway the public debate."

He goes through a number of steps that are the standard parts of this campaign, starting with phony science:

Phony science . . . that creates "uncertainties" about the accepted views of mainstream science.

So you start off with phony science that creates phony uncertainties about the accepted views of mainstream science.

Step two follows with slanted press materials spoon-fed to journalists by industry-affiliated nonprofits and bloggers.

A third step of this PR battle is what he calls "building and financing industry-aligned front groups (fake public-interest organizations) and astroturf groups (fake grassroots organizations)."

And we sure do see those fake public interest organizations and fake grassroots organizations whipped up by the fossil fuel industry today.

Step 4 is outlier scientists—the ones who can cook up the pseudoscience that can be used by foot soldiers:

Outlier scientists are recruited to publish in phony journals and speak at conferences of physicians, lawyers, and other professionals, emphasizing the controversy and sowing "uncertainties" and denial, thus using peer-pressure to create true believers among the influential opinion leaders.

You then shove out into "industry-aligned, or otherwise sympathetic talk-radio and cable-news purveyors, who reference these mainstream sources, react with outrage, and call for policy action." This provides political cover for legislative or other "policy action by partisan allies in government."

Industry representatives can step safely out from behind the curtain for the main act of the culture-war drama and plead their case to policymakers. . . . The strategy is designed to neutralize the primacy of objective knowledge—

We wouldn't want to make decisions around here based on objective knowledge—

and slowly move public opinion toward accepting the industry's position as the only truly reasonable one, subverting the democratic process.

From my experience, that is a pretty good description as to how this game is played.

Thank you, Shawn Otto.

Two of the people who do some of the best work looking at this climate denial apparatus and tracking its funding are academic writers Riley Dunlap and Robert Brulle. Their book, "Climate Change and Society," drills into this pretty well. Here is the description.

Over time, manufacturing uncertainty has evolved into "manufacturing controversy," creating the impression that there is major debate and dissent within the scientific community over the reality of anthropogenic climate change. To accomplish this, corporations and especially CTTs have supported a small number of contrarian scientists (many with no formal training in climate science) and other self-styled "experts" (often social scientists affiliated with CTTs) to produce non-peer-reviewed reports and books, publish in a handful of marginal journals, hold "scientific" conferences, compile dubious lists of supposed scientists who question climate change, and in general mimic the workings of conventional science . . . fashioning a "parallel scientific universe" that serves to generate confusion among the public and policymakers.

Thank you, Riley Dunlap and Robert Brulle for your years of research.

Recently Jane Mayer's book, "Dark Money," has gotten a lot of attention. It focuses on the extent to which the Koch brothers specifically use the caverns for subterranean dark money to mess around in our politics. Following up on the use of conservative think tanks, we have an early—I guess you would say "strategizer" of this effort quoted as saying:

It would be necessary to use ambiguous and misleading names, obscure the true agenda, and conceal the means of control.

That is the background. This whole development of the think tank is described here this way:

In the 1970s, with funding from a handful of hugely wealthy donors . . . as well as some major corporate support, a whole new form of "think tank" emerged that was more engaged in selling predetermined ideology to politicians and the public than undertaking scholarly research.

To use her phrase, it was "the think tank as disguised political weapon."

That is part of what we are up against.

"Democracy in Chains," a book by Nancy MacLean, looks back at some of the early history through which the Koch brothers and others funded this operation. It points out that "the Koch team's most important stealth move, and the one that proved most critical to success, was to wrest control over the machinery of the Republican Party, beginning in the late 1990s and with sharply escalating determination after 2008."

What made them want to do this? I will read. The Koch cadre identified the public's embrace of environmentalism as a problem early on. They then pulled together—

a circle of less-known Koch-funded libertarian think tanks driving what two science scholars describe as systematic environmental "misinformation campaigns." They spread junk pseudoscience to make the public believe that there is still doubt about the peril of climate change, a tactic they learned from the tobacco companies that for years sowed doubt about science to keep the public from connecting smoking and illness.

The Koch team by then could count on its Club for Growth to fund primary challenges to ensure that the party line on environmentalism would be maintained by Republican members of Congress. . . . "We're looking at a party," the economist and columnist Paul Krugman rightly points out, "that has turned its back on science at a time when doing so puts the very future of civilization at risk."

Backing up that chokehold on federal action is what one reporter called a "secretive alliance" between red-state attorneys general and fossil fuel corporations.

Again, we link back to my earlier remarks. One of the red States' attorneys general who link up with the fossil fuel corporations is none other than our EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt.

She concludes it this way:

To put all this another way: if the Koch-network-funded academics and institutions were not in the conversation, the public would have little doubt that the evidence of science is overwhelming and government action to prevent further global warming is urgent.

I will close with a return to Jane Mayer, whose research on this whole dark money problem that bedevils our democracy has been nothing less than heroic, in my view. She wrote recently:

If there was any lingering doubt that a tiny clique of fossil-fuel barons has captured America's energy and environmental policies, it was dispelled . . . when the Trump Administration withdrew from the Paris climate accord. . . . [A] majority of Americans in literally every state wanted to remain within the agreement, and . . . the heads of many of the country's most successful and iconic Fortune 100 companies, from Disney to General Electric, did, too. . . . Yet . . . a tiny—and until recently, almost faceless—minority somehow prevailed.

How this happened is no longer a secret. The answer . . . is "a story of big political money." It is, perhaps, the most astounding example of influence-buying in modern American political history.

It is focused now on climate change because climate change is—and I quote her again here—"a direct challenge to the most powerful industry that has ever existed on the face of the Earth. There's no depth to which they are unwilling to sink to challenge anything threatening their interests."

That is a pretty good description by a lot of very well-regarded, and some in cases, Pulitzer Prize winning and award-winning writers and researchers about where we are. The result of all that is the gridlock that these interests have bought and paid for in Congress on this critical issue and an administration that is driven by fossil fuel interests to roll back all regulations that impinge on fossil fuel profits. Using that screen these authors have talked about—and that I have talked about—of think tanks and foundations and public relations firms and trade associations and, of course, those rivers of dark money flowing through subterranean political caverns, this industry—the fossil fuel industry—has taken control of and disabled our American political system. That is a very inconvenient truth for those in our political system, but its inconvenience takes away nothing from its truth.

Thanks to these authors and researchers and many others like them—many others like them—the truth of what has happened is plain. It is not just plain in these books. It will be plain before the reckoning gaze of history. There will be a reckoning. History always looks back, ultimately. If you look at these books and you look at others and you look at the record of what has taken place and the reporting, there is no doubt that this is the biggest influence-buying operation of all time. Do we in Congress really want to be found on the side of this crooked apparatus when that reckoning comes? God, I hope not. It is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that at 12:20 p.m. on Wednesday, April 11, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Ring nomination and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING DANIEL AKAKA

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant, a beloved statesman, and a gentleman of the Senate: Senator Daniel Akaka. On Friday, Senator Akaka passed away peacefully with his family gathered by his bedside. He leaves behind not only a strong record of legislative achievement, but a legacy of love and Aloha that animated his work here in the Senate.

Senator Akaka committed his life to public service. Whether as a soldier, educator, or Senator, he dedicated himself fully to the betterment of our Nation. After graduating high school in 1942, Senator Akaka enlisted in the Army Corps of Engineers, playing a key role in critical construction projects across the Pacific Theater during World War II. Senator Akaka's military service was a springboard to even greater opportunities, allowing him to finance a college education through the GI bill.

As a beneficiary of this historic legislation, Senator Akaka was perhaps the greatest advocate of our troops during his time here in the Senate, writing and spearheading passage of the 21st Century GI bill. He wanted our servicemembers to have the same opportunity he had to transition into civilian life, receive an education, and change this country for the better.

With help from the GI bill, Senator Akaka earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in education from the University of Hawaii. For nearly two decades, he worked in Hawaii's public schools, first as a teacher and eventually as a principal. Working in the trenches of America's public education system, Senator Akaka gained the