

streamline and consolidate community care into a single comprehensive program, standardizing eligibility for this program and repealing the Choice program after 1 year.

The MISSION Act also includes a phasing in of an expanded Caregiver program, so that veterans of all eras can access this important benefit. This is an issue I have long worked on, having helped create the original Caregivers program at the VA. This expansion will likely help thousands of family caregivers.

In addition, the MISSION Act will help the VA better recruit quality healthcare professionals with academic and financial incentives, as well as help ensure access to care in rural and underserved areas.

I understand that there are some concerns about this legislation.

The asset and infrastructure review provision, which has been compared to the BRAC review of DOD facilities, is contentious. I joined Senator MANCHIN in efforts to pass a version of this without the AIR provision. I am disappointed that effort was blocked by our Republican colleagues, but I also appreciate the efforts of my Democratic colleagues in helping ensure safeguards in the bill around the AIR provision, so that any process includes coordination with and review by Congress, veterans service organizations, the public, and other stakeholders every step of the way.

I also recognize that there is a serious concern about privatization at the VA, a concern that is especially acute under this administration and given the fact that the VA lacks senior leadership.

Congress will need to ensure continued strong funding for the VA so that we are not sacrificing investments in VA infrastructure, direct patient care, medical research, and more in exchange for community care—which will be costly—under the MISSION Act.

We will need to continue to provide oversight during the process of selecting a VA Secretary, one who will balance the need of some veterans to access authorized private care with protecting the VA system. I look forward to meeting with the VA Secretary nominee to assess his qualifications on this and other matters soon.

It is easy for us Members of Congress to speak about this bill on the floor—to thank our veterans and their families for their service—but it is more meaningful, more important to do what we can through action.

Some of my proudest moments in Congress have included efforts to recognize, honor, and thank our veterans, but the very least we can do for our veterans is to ensure they get the care they need.

I have been working with my colleague, Senator DUCKWORTH, to help ensure that veterans and their spouses at the Illinois Veterans Home at Quincy receive high quality care, because, for the past 3 years, IVH Quincy has

been dealing with several Legionnaires' outbreaks, outbreaks that have sickened more than 65 and, sadly, killed 13.

It is unacceptable that 13 veterans died from contracting the Legionella bacteria before this Governor finally produced a comprehensive plan of action.

I have worked with and will continue to work with State and Federal officials to ensure that IVH Quincy has the technical and financial support it needs.

Let me close with this: The VA MISSION Act reflects this sentiment as well—too often, our servicemembers return home only to find themselves facing challenge after challenge, suffering from the physical and mental wounds of war. This bill will help ensure that we uphold the promise we have made, to provide the care, support, and respect our veterans have earned and deserve.

I want to thank my colleagues Senators ISAKSON and TESTER for their good-faith efforts on this bill. I am pleased to join them and others in the Senate in supporting this legislation.

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 106 on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act of 2018. On vote No. 106, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 2372, the VA MISSION Act of 2018.●

REMOVAL OF NOMINATION OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on May 10, I announced my intention to object to a unanimous consent request for the Senate to take up the nomination of Christopher C. Krebs who has been nominated by President Trump to serve as Under secretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate at the Department of Homeland Security, DHS. I did so because DHS had yet to clear for public release important information about vulnerabilities in U.S. telephone networks that are being exploited, potentially by foreign governments, to target Americans.

Last week, I discussed with Mr. Krebs our shared interest in protecting Americans from sophisticated cyber security threats, particularly those that exploit flaws in U.S. communications networks. I am pleased to say that DHS subsequently provided me with a letter that included much of the information that I had previously requested. I intend to make this letter public in the coming days and believe that it will further much needed debate about the security of U.S. telephone

networks and the Federal Communications Commission's lax approach to regulating the privacy and cyber security practices of wireless carriers.

In light of this action, I will no longer object to any unanimous consent request for the Senate to take up Mr. Krebs's nomination.

HONORING PRIVATE MARTIN A. TREPTOW

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Martin A. Treptow who bravely served as a private in the U.S. Army during the First World War.

Martin enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 1917 while working as a barber in Cherokee, IA, and was soon stationed in France as part of the 168th Infantry of the 42nd Division, the famed Rainbow Division. During the assault on Hill 212 on La Croix Rouge Farm, Martin courageously volunteered to deliver an important message to another platoon, despite heavy enemy fire. Martin successfully completed his mission but paid the ultimate sacrifice in doing so.

As his belongings were being prepared to send home to his family and friends, Martin's diary was found. His diary included an entry entitled "My Pledge," and Martin had written: "America must win this war. Therefore, I will work, I will save, I will ensure, I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone."

I ask my colleagues to join me as I proudly recognize Martin A. Treptow, whose heroic actions and inspiring words epitomize the duty and sacrifice of all the brave men and women who serve and have served the United States in defense of our freedom.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CENTENNIAL OF GRENVILLE, SOUTH DAKOTA

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Grenville, SD. The town of Grenville will be celebrating its centennial on June 8 through June 10, 2018. Grenville will host centennial events which include a parade, street dances, a softball tournament, raffles, a pig roast, children events, and much more.

Grenville, located in Day County, was given the christened name of Zielona Gora, meaning "green hills," which is an accurate description of the area's beautiful sloping hills and majestic landscape. Since its founding 100 years ago, the community of Grenville remains resilient in upholding South Dakota values. Today the robust traditions passed down by determined settlers continue to endure throughout the Grenville community.

I offer my congratulations to the citizens of Grenville on their centennial celebration and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.●