

abroad, knowing that they may not survive. This Memorial Day, let us pause to pay honor to their immense courage.

I specifically remember the sacrifices of my fellow citizens from Maryland such as SPC Tocarra Green. She was the first woman from Maryland to die in the Iraq War. I remember SGT Erick M. Houck, a Baltimore native like me, who died in Afghanistan just last year. It is a remarkable notion that our fellow citizens were willing to pay such a high cost for our own freedom. They and those like them deserve every honor we can bestow.

Memorial Day weekend often serves as an opportunity for Americans to spend time with friends and family. As we consider the cost of our freedom, let us also remember the families of our fallen, our Gold Star families. As we remember the sacrifices of our fallen servicemembers, we also recognize the tremendous loss to their families and admire their patriotism and perseverance.

Despite all of these sacrifices, the struggle to preserve our freedom continues. Just as in times past, our enemies seek to threaten the freedom for which our American brothers and sisters have laid down their lives. These enemies don't just fight our troops on the battlefield; they have attacked the integrity of our electoral system and our freedom of speech while seeking to reverse our progress against racial inequity and religious freedom. One of the best ways to honor our fallen comrades is for us to work together to defend our freedom and our American principles. We cannot allow the erosion of the liberties our family members and friends have fought so hard to defend.

As I pray for the fallen and their families this weekend, I will also pray for our men and women currently serving in harm's way and for their families too. I am truly grateful for those who have served our country, past and present, and I will continue to do my very best to serve them in return.

#### TAX REFORM

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as you know, Congress passed, and the President signed, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act late last year. While much media attention has been focused on certain aspects of tax reform, one topic that has not received due attention is the positive effect that tax reform is already having on small businesses. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I strongly supported this legislation because I saw the potential it had to spur investment, create economic growth, and provide tax relief to the millions of small business owners whose resilience and work ethic provide ample evidence that the American Dream is alive and well. This piece of legislation has had a positive impact, not just for small business owners and their employees in

my home State of Idaho, but also for small business owners and employees all across our country. I plan to introduce and highlight these small businesses on a weekly basis for the near future.

While there are more and more uplifting stories of small businesses that are benefiting from tax reform each day, today I wish to share the story of Renaissance Property Management, LLC located in Dearborn, MI. Renaissance Property Management's owner, Rudaina Hamade, and her son Michael operate this successful small business, which specializes in acquiring rental properties, asset management, and 24 hour property maintenance. Through their business, the Hamades and their 5 to 10 employees, some of whom are seasonal, strive to offer tenants affordable and distinguished homes. During the last recession, when so many small businesses were suffering, her determination was on full display. Though the Detroit housing market experienced a steep decline, the Hamades persevered, and after finding financial backing, they continued to invest in the Detroit market even while many others were reducing their footprint in the city.

Ms. Hamade, a Lebanese immigrant, is a prime example of the American Dream, having exhibited an amazing drive and work ethic throughout her life. She received her finance degree from Davenport University while raising her children and running a small business. In addition to running her company and raising a family, Ms. Hamade is also an active member of the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Council at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Changes in the tax law have offered welcome relief to the Hamades' employees and their families. This new law has enabled the Hamades to provide their employees with bonuses ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000. They have also been able to make capital investments in their company. These investments include upgrades to their computer system and the purchasing of new software, machinery, and tools. Stories like these show that tax reform was a more than worthwhile goal that has improved small businesses' outlook, provided employee bonuses, lowered taxes, and increased investment in many sectors of our economy. In the coming weeks and months, I intend to bring more attention to the positive effects that tax reform has had on small businesses across our great country.

#### HUNGARY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this week, the Senate is poised to confirm the nomination of David Cornstein to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Hungary. Against that backdrop, as well as reports that Secretary of State Pompeo will meet with the Hungarian Foreign Minister in Washington at the end of this month, it is timely to con-

sider the troubling situation in Hungary.

Budapest is a fabulous city. The Parliament is regarded by many as one of the most beautiful legislative houses in the world. Hungarians are a warm and generous people, and the United States and Hungary have a shared history dating to the times of Lajos Kossuth, whose bust graces the halls of the U.S. Congress. Hungarians have come to this country as both immigrants and refugees, enriching our national fabric.

The beauty of Budapest masks a growing climate of fear, however. For the past 8 years, Hungary's ruling Fidesz party has tried to pass majoritarianism off as democracy. Media pluralism has disappeared. The government plays favorites with religions, preferring some while discriminating against others, like the Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship. Moreover, the checks and balances that are essential for democracy are missing in action. To say that the ruling party now exercises unchecked legal power is not an exercise in hyperbole, but merely a concise analysis of the facts.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban has allowed corruption to flourish, enriching his own friends and family. The government has recentralized, and more of the economy is either under state control or in the hands of Orban's cronies. Once Fidesz won two-thirds of the seats in Parliament in 2010, the party changed the election system to perpetuate that outcome. As Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE, elections observers concluded, separation of state and party is no longer respected. For a country that suffered under a one-party regime, that is a deeply disturbing conclusion.

In 2013, I chaired a Helsinki Commission hearing on the trajectory of democracy in Hungary. Frankly, I did not think things would get this bad, in part because I did not think the ruling Fidesz party would become more extremist than Hungary's strongest opposition party, Jobbik, but after 2010, with Jobbik's anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric serving as a Greek chorus, Fidesz leaders carved out their own revisionist bona fides, worked to rehabilitate fascist-era figures, and repeatedly awarded, elevated, and amplified one of the country's most extremist polemicists. They determined that they could get away with further escalating hate-mongering against racial and religious minorities with one tweak: call them Muslims and migrants. Hatred, it seems, is fungible.

Not surprisingly, the politics of fear, historical revisionism, and national grievances have found expression in the ruling party's foreign policy too. The most alarming example has been Hungary's opportunistic approach to Ukraine following Russia's 2014 invasion, with Hungary's rhetoric often echoing Moscow's. Overall, the Hungarian Government's approach suggests that it is not interested in a dialogue about the Hungarian minority in