

She joined the U.S. Senate in 2013 and has served in a Congress often divided by partisan views. She has been willing to work with President Trump and to work across the aisle on many issues, all for the good of the people of North Dakota. I have been one of those she has worked with, and I am happy to call her a friend.

The accomplishments that brought her to the Senate are substantial. Before serving in the U.S. Senate, Senator HEITKAMP served as North Dakota's tax commissioner and, later, attorney general.

I have had the privilege of working with Senator HEITKAMP on many issues. Notably, we worked together on an issue that has long been important to Wyoming, forging parity between brick-and-mortar stores and e-commerce. During her time as tax commissioner, North Dakota sought to make an out-of-State mail order retailer, which had no physical presence in the State, collect and pay use taxes on sales into the State. After entering Congress, HEIDI cosponsored my bill, the Marketplace Fairness Act, seeking to level the playing field for brick-and-mortar retail stores and out-of-State online sellers. Later, we worked on amicus briefs with several of our colleagues, and our efforts to create this level playing fields went all the way to the Supreme Court in the case *South Dakota v. Wayfair, Inc.*, a case in which the U.S. Supreme Court sided with our position. These efforts have been such an important part of my time in the Senate, and I thank Senator HEITKAMP for her work on this issue.

HEIDI has consistently and tirelessly fought for the people of North Dakota. She has worked in the best interests of small businesses and contributed in a significant way to culture of the Senate and the Nation as a whole.

If her past is any indication of her future, I think it is clear that she will be closing the door on this great chapter of her life and moving on to something new. Whatever that may prove to be I am certain it will make good use of her abilities, background, and experience.

My best wishes to HEIDI, her husband Darwin, and their children as they enter the next chapter in their lives. I thank her for her willingness to serve the people of North Dakota and the people of the United States. There are countless ways of saying farewell, one of my favorites is: Happy Trails. Until we meet again.

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT BILL

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act, WEEE Act, which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported yesterday afternoon. It has been my honor to work with Senator BOOZMAN on this legislation, which House For-

eign Affairs Committee Chairman ED ROYCE and Representative LOIS FRANKEL originally introduced. The House passed the measure on July 17, 2018. Yesterday, the Senate took a big step toward passing this important bill into law.

Both here in the U.S. and abroad, how a country treats its women is a barometer of its success. I believe that, when women succeed, so do our communities, especially economically. The WEEE Act is critical in achieving this goal. It brings attention to helping women entrepreneurs, including those living in poverty, to access the tools they need to start and grow their businesses and invest in themselves, their families, and their communities. It recognizes that women are not always on a level playing field, particularly when they face discrimination, gender-based violence and harassment, and restrictions on their opportunities.

Roughly 1 billion women around the world are currently left out of the formal financial system, which causes many to rely on informal means of saving and borrowing that are riskier and less reliable. In many countries, because men are considered legal heads of household, married women are required to receive permission from their husbands just to open a bank account. As a result, we have observed the propagation of savings groups, primarily composed of women, recognized as a vital entry point, especially for poor and very poor women, to formal financial services. There is a high demand for such groups to protect and grow the savings of women with formal financial institutions. Evidence shows that, once a savings group is linked to a bank, the average savings per member increases between 40 to 100 percent, and the average profit per member doubles. Investing in financial literacy, business leadership training, and mentorship are key elements to these outcomes.

By requiring that 50 percent of the U.S. Agency for International Development's—USAID—micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise resources are targeted to activities that reach the very poor, as well as enterprises owned, managed, and controlled by women, the WEEE Act will help break down the barriers preventing women from participating in their local economies. It will help diminish the estimated 70 percent of women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in the formal sector that are unserved or underserved in terms of access to financial services, resulting in a financing gap of \$300 trillion for women-owned small businesses. Furthermore, the WEEE Act will modernize USAID's development assistance toolkit to include innovative credit scoring models, financial technology, financial literacy, insurance, and actions to improve property and inheritance rights.

We know that women's economic advancement can lead to greater security and resilience, as well as stronger investments in health and nutrition, edu-

cation, and safety—not only for women but for their families and communities too. According to the World Bank, for each additional year of schooling, a woman's labor earnings increase by nearly 12 percent. CARE reports that participation in village savings groups increased spending on children's school fees by 76 percent in Tanzania and nearly doubled the health spending for families in Rwanda, along with increases in their spending on food and nutrition. This is exactly the evidence-driven development work that the U.S. should be supporting.

We are making enormous strides, but there is still much to be done. Enacting the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act into law will help equip women to overcome the critical barriers they face when seeking economic opportunity and will open doors for children, families, and communities to benefit as well. A McKinsey Global Institute report estimates that achieving global gender parity in economic activity could add as much as \$28 trillion to annual global gross domestic product by 2025. These stark statistics serve both as a beacon of hope and a reminder of the great challenges that still must be overcome. The WEEE Act will help advance us towards this goal, and we must not stop fighting until such parity is reached.

THE ISRAEL ANTI-BOYCOTT ACT

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today I wish to add myself as a cosponsor of S. 720, the Israel Anti-Boycott Act, and urge my colleagues to support this important legislation in its modified form. I have long and staunchly opposed the BDS movement and associated efforts to unfairly isolate Israel in international forums. This legislation will prevent international entities from imposing their will on U.S. businesses with regards to their decisions, consistent with U.S. law, to conduct commerce with our close ally Israel and its citizens.

After carefully examining the proposed changes to the legislation, I support the amended version of this bill put forward by my colleagues, Senator CARDIN and Senator PORTMAN. This revised version of the legislation makes meaningful revisions to the original language to clarify and improve First Amendment protections. Initial concerns that this bill unintentionally infringed on individuals' First Amendment rights have now been addressed by these changes, agreed upon earlier this year, and I feel confident that these modifications safeguard Americans' constitutional right to free speech.

CAMEROON

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I wish to raise the alarm about the escalating violence in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon and to urge the administration to develop