

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

and execute a meaningful strategy to help prevent additional bloodshed.

For several years, Cameroon, a historically stable country bridging west and central Africa, has faced a significant security threat in its far north. Boko Haram combatants, originating from Nigeria, have crossed the border into Cameroon and carried out hundreds of attacks on local residents. Reports indicate Boko Haram killed more than 900 people in 2017 in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin subregion, which includes northern Cameroon. Boko Haram's Islamic State-aligned splinter faction, ISIS-West Africa, also poses a threat to the country. With U.S. help, Cameroon has been responding to the challenge, although some of these efforts have prompted concerns about its military's respect for human rights.

Now, Cameroon faces another challenge, one that some observers fear has already burgeoned into a civil war. A budding separatist insurgency emerged in Cameroon's Anglophone regions in 2017. Insurgent attacks and a brutal military crackdown have caused significant internal displacement and given rise to credible allegations of serious human rights abuses by both separatists and government security forces. The separatist movement grew out of longstanding grievances among Anglophones over their perceived political and economic marginalization. These tensions worsened in 2016 due to the central government's appointments of French-speakers to local schools and courts in Cameroon's Anglophone majority western provinces in 2016. The government violently suppressed a largely peaceful protest movement that arose in response, quashing demonstrations by force, arresting prominent civil society activists on what appear to be trumped up terrorism charges, cutting internet access to the region, and banning some civil society organizations.

On October 1, 2017, secessionists symbolically declared the independence of "Ambazonia." According to Amnesty International, security forces responded by killing at least 20 protestors and arresting over 500. Cameroonian soldiers have reportedly killed civilians, used excessive force against peaceful demonstrators, tortured and mistreated suspected separatists and detainees, and burned hundreds of homes in several villages as violence has escalated. Some extremist Anglophone separatists, meanwhile, have burned down schools; kidnapped traditional leaders, police, and government administrators; and killed civilians. More than 220 civilians have lost their lives, according to the International Crisis Group, including an American missionary killed in October when he was caught in crossfire between armed groups. As of May, at least 160,000 people were internally displaced, 80 percent of whom are reportedly hiding in forests. At least 25,000 Cameroonians have sought refuge in Nigeria since late 2017, according to UN

agencies, although some observers on the ground assess the number of refugees and internally displaced to be higher.

The separatist insurgency and the heavy handed government response has put thousands of innocent lives at risk, destabilizing an already fragile region.

There is no military solution to this problem. Immediate, strategic action by the government, the diaspora, separatist leaders, as well as the U.S. and other international partners could bring peace, but the window of opportunity to prevent widespread civil conflict is quickly closing. I therefore call on each of the aforementioned actors to take steps right away to avert the worst case scenario.

The Trump administration must develop a comprehensive strategy to prevent widespread conflict and violence. This strategy must go beyond military support. The State and Defense Departments have administered training and equipment in support of the Cameroonian military's counterterrorism efforts, as well as its peace-keeping deployment to the Central African Republic. However, disturbing reports of security force abuses in the far north and Anglophone regions merit serious attention. I trust and expect that the administration is conducting Leahy vetting on all of the individual and units with whom it is working. But we must do more. Given that security force abuses have been shown to be a major driver of extremist recruitment in Africa, the State Department should conduct a thorough policy review of our decision to partner with Cameroon on counterterrorism and in security assistance more broadly.

A critical element of the administration's approach must be support for building democratic practices, assistance aimed at opening political space, and activities to combat corruption in Cameroon. While this administration may fail to understand that democratic values, human rights, and good governance promote long-term sustainable peace, Members of this body understand that these values are and must remain a core component of U.S. foreign policy. I am pleased that the administration has finally seen fit to set aside money in Fiscal Year 2018 funds for such activities, after years of disappointing neglect for the sector. But \$1 million is far too modest an amount to have an appreciable impact. Our actions must match our rhetoric. Our Ambassador in Cameroon has been outspoken, forthright, and, as perhaps a predictable result, has been unfairly criticized by the government. State Department officials at the highest levels here in Washington must support him in speaking truth to power both publicly and in private messaging, and follow that messaging with actions that will have a tangible impact.

The government of Cameroon must take urgent steps as well. President Paul Biya's administration has applied a military solution to a political prob-

lem. It must now must take critical steps to forestall a worse-case scenario by committing to a political resolution. The highest levels of government—including President Biya—must rethink the wisdom of sending the Cameroonian military to make war upon its own citizens. It should publicly and unequivocally instruct security forces to stop targeting civilians, cease abuses and excesses, and hold those responsible for human rights abuses accountable—including through military prosecutions where appropriate—in a clear, transparent manner.

The government should facilitate access to the Anglophone regions by humanitarian organizations and independent human rights investigators. I urge the government to consider neutral third party mediation to engage organizations that represent Anglophones and facilitate a dialogue without preconditions to end the violence. In January 2018, Nigerian authorities forcibly returned 47 Anglophone activists, including reported asylum seekers, to Cameroon, where they were detained as "terrorists." To show its good faith support for a peaceful resolution, the government should release peaceful, moderate voices from the Anglophone region who represent those with legitimate political grievances. And the Biya administration must be willing to contemplate greater political decentralization to address legitimate grievances in peripheral regions—possibly including a return to federalism.

The government needs to open political space more broadly. In the wake of October's elections, President Biya, who has been in office since 1982, will serve a seventh term in office. October's elections are the latest in a string of elections marred by controversy, harassment of opposition, and other irregularities. A press conference broadcast on state-run television featuring people identified as international election observers from Transparency International—who in fact were in no way affiliated with that organization endorsing the conduct of elections, was a brazen attempt to provide a veneer of legitimacy to a process that was deeply flawed due to restricted political space.

It is time for President Biya to cement his legacy by laying the groundwork for meaningful political competition in Cameroon. As Benin's then-President Mathieu Kerekou said in 2009 when he decided not to change the constitution and run for a third term, "if you do not leave power, power will leave you." Future elections must take place on a level playing field. In this year's elections the field was heavily tilted in favor of the ruling party. Addressing meaningful barriers to political participation may go a long way towards addressing the root causes of discontent in the Anglophone regions.

I call upon separatist leaders and their supporters to commit to seeking a peaceful, negotiated solution to the

Anglophone crisis. The separatists too must support accountability for all actors engaged in hostilities who may have committed human rights abuses. Attacks on civilians are inexcusable. All armed and political actors must unequivocally condemn human rights abuses.

Finally, the diaspora has a critical role to play. I urge members of the diaspora to clearly and unambiguously condemn violence in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. The inflammatory rhetoric on social media by some Cameroonians at home and abroad is unhelpful. All diaspora should scrupulously investigate the charities and organizations to which they are contributing funding, lest they unwittingly send money to organizations that have engaged in violence against the very people they are trying to help.

Mr. President, the U.S. and Cameroon have a long history of cordial relations. Peace Corps has been in Cameroon since 1962. State Department and USAID-administered bilateral funding amounted to \$83 million in FY2017. And for the past decade we have partnered with Cameroon to counter terrorism and maritime piracy, with U.S. security assistance rising substantially since 2014 in response to the Boko Haram crisis. Since 2015, Cameroon has hosted hundreds of U.S. military personnel who conduct regional intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance operations and otherwise support counterterrorism efforts. As conditions on the ground deteriorate, the U.S. is in a position where immediate concentrated action to support a resolution of the problem might disrupt the cycle of violence and help all parties work toward a negotiated solution. Our diplomatic intervention, if well thought out, could make a difference. I urge the administration to take swift, meaningful action.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO ELIAS THOMAS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, each year, the 1.4 million members of the National Association of Realtors recognize five of their own with the Good Neighbor Award for their service to others, locally or globally. I am delighted to congratulate 2018 Good Neighbor Elias Thomas of Shapleigh, ME, for inspiring contributions from his hometown to some of the poorest villages in India.

Mr. Thomas, broker-owner of EXIT Key Real Estate in Shapleigh, has spent 40 years volunteering with Rotary International. His compassionate work started with his local chapter, where he helped to build meditation gardens for those with mental illness and developed job and housing assistance programs for newly released prison inmates. His international efforts began in the late 1990s, when he travelled to Cozumel, Mexico, for a project to prevent the island's garbage dump from polluting the water system.

In 2001, Mr. Thomas journeyed to India to assist in Rotary's signature project of preventing and eradicating polio. The deplorable living conditions and the gratitude of villagers for the Rotarians' assistance convinced him that India was where his energy and commitment were most needed.

Mr. Thomas has returned to India every year since then, leading teams of volunteers and personally immunizing about 500 children against polio. He has raised \$40,000 to help pay for the corrective surgeries of some 1,000 victims of the disease. Throughout his four decades as a Rotarian, Mr. Thomas has raised more than \$350,000 for Rotary International's charitable endeavors.

During a 2008 trip to India, he became aware of another dire situation there: the lack of safe drinking water in desert communities in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan, which can lead to illness and death due to dysentery.

Mr. Thomas assembled a team of 78 volunteers from eight countries and worked with village councils on a plan to build dams to capture the runoff from monsoons for drinking water and crop irrigation. Every year for the last 10 years, Mr. Thomas has led a total of 350 volunteers from around the world, and working with local residents and without mechanized equipment, they have hand-built nine dams that provide clean and safe water to more than 45,000 people.

A fellow Rotarian who has been part of that team describes Mr. Thomas this way: "Elias has deep faith that we can bring about change. He's a man that has dreams, and while most people talk about what they wish they could do to help others, he does it. To Elias, everyone in humanity is critically important."

Elias Thomas exemplifies the motto of Rotary International, "Service Above Self." His caring spirit and boundless energy are improving and even saving lives here at home and around the world.

TRIBUTE TO HANNAH ROSENTHAL

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Hannah Rosenthal's extraordinary career as she celebrates her retirement as President and CEO of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. Hannah has had a long and distinguished career as an influential advocate of tolerance, and her mark on the Jewish community is indelible. She is best known for building bridges between disparate factions and believing that everyone, no matter their background or perspective, deserves a seat at the table.

Hannah transferred from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts to the University of Wisconsin-Madison after falling in love with the city and the university during a Hebrew class she attended the summer after her sophomore year. She received her bachelor of arts degree from UW-Madison and studied for the rabbinate in Jerusalem and California.

Hannah's father was a rabbi and Holocaust survivor who inspired her to lead a life shaped by her Jewish faith. Rabbi Franz Rosenthal's experiences as a prisoner at Buchenwald and a refugee in this country helped forge his daughter's identity as an avid champion of human rights.

Hannah's extensive career includes impressive experience at State, local, national, and international levels. She served as the founding executive director of the Wisconsin Women's Council and head of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. In 1995, she was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as the midwest regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Although I had the pleasure of working with Hannah at many points in her remarkable career, I am especially grateful for all she taught me about effective advocacy, particularly advocacy on behalf of women. Early in my career, I worked with Hannah in her role leading the Wisconsin Women's Council to organize support for State efforts to guarantee equal pay for equal work.

Hannah is perhaps best known for her role as the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. Appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009, she used her role to build coalitions of sometimes unlikely allies to denounce hatred around the world. She was not afraid to confront bigotry head on. She personally took those who denied the Holocaust on tours of concentration camps. In 2010, she switched her speech on anti-Semitism at an international conference on tolerance with the Special Representative to Muslim Communities so that she condemned Islamophobia in the strongest possible terms while her Muslim counterpart strongly denounced anti-Semitism. She summed up her philosophy succinctly in an interview with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum by saying, "This isn't just about the Jews, this is about hatred, and that affects everyone."

Hannah is bold, resolute, and fearless. She believes there is no room in this world for intolerance toward others, and she has made it her mission in life to speak out against hatred and bigotry in all forms. It is the mindset that shaped her legacy at the Milwaukee Jewish Federation and led her to challenge young people to volunteer at organizations that serve people unlike them through the creation of the Hours Against Hate global campaign.

Hannah deserves to be proud of her many national and international accomplishments, but her heart remains rooted at home in Wisconsin with her friends, family, and community. Hannah has made many close friends along her journey who stuck by her through thick and thin. She also takes much pride and delight in her two daughters and young grandson.

Public servant, activist, icon, and pioneer are words that only begin to