

all women. The person who is believed to be the frontrunner of them all is a woman named Thelma Aldana, who is the immediate past Attorney General. She is tough on crime and tough on corruption. She has been in this country some this month and had the opportunity to talk with Vice President Biden to get some encouragement from him.

Joe Biden is beloved in Delaware and in some other places around the country, but they really love him there because he has been interested in root causes—not just in treating the symptoms of the problems and challenges on the border but actually helping to address the root causes.

The fellow who has just been elected President of El Salvador is a 38-year-old millennial. His social media people have now started to help the former Attorney General who is running for President of Guatemala.

As the Presiding Officer and my colleagues know, the most important ingredient in the success of any organization I have ever seen is leadership. It is leadership.

We are seeing a changing of the guard not only in terms of age but also in terms of just where they come from, on a scale of 1 to 100.

The last thing I want to mention—if I could find my spot here in my notes—is that none of this is easy, but it basically says that we have a moral obligation to the folks down here. We make their lives miserable because of our drug addiction, and we ought to help them. They have to do most of the work, but we have to help them. We can't just help them for a couple of weeks or a couple of months or a couple of years, as we found out in Colombia; we have to stick with this a good deal longer to help change the culture of these countries.

I am encouraged to say that change is happening, and we should keep it going. There is a sense of optimism that is beginning to emerge in these countries. I think there are some reasons to be encouraged that a plan modeled after Plan Colombia and tailored especially for this part of the world can actually succeed. If we don't give up and especially if they don't give up, it very well will.

P.S. The cost of actually capturing somebody on our border who is starting to come in illegally, detaining them, putting them in a holding camp or a detention center, feeding them, providing healthcare, and eventually deporting them and sending them back down to wherever they came from, I am told is \$27,000 a person—\$27,000 a person.

These people love their countries, and given a chance, they would much rather stay down there. They would much rather stay down there. They might like to come up to visit and maybe do some work sometime and go back home. But they want to have a decent life. Frankly, if we will help them realize that, they will stay down

there. They may come up as tourists, and maybe we can go down there as tourists. We heard that over and over.

The last thing we heard down there is that they love America. They love America. They are mindful of what we are trying to do to help them. They are grateful for the help we are providing. I know a bunch of them. I met a lot of them down there. Some of them live in my State. For the most part, they are good and decent people. They deserve our help. I am proud of the support this Congress has provided for the last 4 years for their lives and prosperity. My hope is that we will continue to do that and continue to use that money to leverage a lot of good work not only for those countries but for nonprofits, NGOs, foundations, and private companies, and that together we will get the job done. I am encouraged.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I really want to say to my friend, Senator JEFF MERKLEY, who went down to this part of the world any number of times as a young man and went back again last month still as a young man, that he has provided a lot of great insight. It has been a joy going with him and now working with him on this as we go forward.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). The Senator from Arkansas.

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S CENTENNIAL

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, the American Legion, the Nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, is celebrating its centennial this year. I rise today to recognize this milestone.

For the past 100 years, the American Legion has been a leading advocate for veterans and their families. The Legion has played a role in crafting legislation, shaping policies, expanding services, and creating generations of civic-minded Americans.

Founded in Paris following World War I, the American Legion was officially chartered by Congress on September 16, 1919. Since its founding, Legionnaires have proudly worked to strengthen our country and our communities, while upholding the promise our country made to those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

The list of achievements that the Legion has helped fight for is long and includes the creation of the U.S. Veterans' Bureau in 1924, the forerunner of the Veterans' Administration. Decades later, the Legion was active in elevating to Cabinet-level status the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Following the American Legion's lead, Congress adopted a flag code to formally lay out the protocol for carrying and displaying our Nation's banner. The Legion continues to actively support the constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from desecration.

During World War II, the American Legion drafted legislation that would become the GI bill. Legionnaires were

instrumental in securing passage of this landmark legislation that helped returning troops further their education, buy houses, and start businesses. It also established hiring privileges for veterans.

The Legion continues its strong advocacy for improving these and other benefits. Its efforts were vital in the passage of the Post-9/11 GI bill and the enhancement measure passed in 2017, which bears the name of a former American Legion commander, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act.

After a century of service, Legionnaires remain just as committed to advocating on behalf of our veterans today.

Last month, I met with members of the American Legion Department of Arkansas who were visiting the Nation's Capital to voice their support for the organization's 2019 priorities. This includes supporting the VA's efforts to reduce veteran suicides, improving healthcare for women veterans, fighting veteran homelessness, ensuring GI bill benefits, and ensuring benefits to veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. I am optimistic about the progress we will make on these important issues because of the excellent and active work of the American Legion Department of Arkansas, which has more than 10,000 members in nearly 150 posts throughout the State.

The Arkansas Department of the American Legion was incorporated on May 12, 1919. National headquarters records show it was the first incorporation of the organization in the United States. There is a proud history of involvement in all corners of the State, ranging from the annual fallen heroes ceremony to the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year program.

I have had the privilege of participating in Legion events around the State, including honoring the Arkansans who paid the ultimate sacrifice, celebrating the milestones of the posts, and recognizing young Arkansans who have been distinguished by Legionnaires. The Legion rightfully prides itself as being actively involved in the community and teaching Arkansas youth how to be good citizens. Through a variety of programs and activities—Boys and Girls State Programs, support of the Boy Scouts of America, and the American Legion Baseball Program, to name a few—it encourages fostering a dedication to civic responsibility, promoting American values, and serving others.

For 100 years, the American Legion has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of veterans and their families. In honor of their centennial, Congress approved minting a coin to recognize its milestone. I was a proud cosponsor of the bill and support its passage to commemorate the legacy of the American Legion and the thousands of men and women who have supported its mission and upheld the four pillars of its founding: veterans affairs and rehabilitation,

national security, Americanism, and children and youth.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have seen up close Legionnaires' and the American Legion Auxiliary's dedication and the results their efforts have produced in Arkansas and across our entire country. I am proud to recognize the American Legion on its 100 years of advocacy and celebrate this century of service with the 2 million members who are making a difference each day as Legionnaires.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Matey nomination expire at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12; further, 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. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, on International Women's Day, we reflect on the enormous contributions women make worldwide to their communities and their countries across every aspect of society including justice, politics, culture, peacebuilding, the economy, and national security. On this day, we also recognize and recommit to fighting on behalf of the many women whose voices governments seek to silence. Around the world, women take enormous risks to advance the rights of their fellow citizens and to promote the principles of freedom of expression, religion, and assembly. They fight for rights to access education and healthcare, and they fight discrimination, corruption, and violence. For their words and for their actions, all too often, governments turn these women into political prisoners.

Today, I want to highlight just a tiny fraction of the countless number of women and girls held behind bars unjustly. Similarly, unfortunately, the repressive governments detaining these women are just a small fraction of the governments around the world that lock up women for exercising their fundamental freedoms.

Just last week, the government of Saudi Arabia announced that it would

put on trial its country's leading women's rights activists who have been in prison without charges since May 2018. The crackdown on these activists began just weeks ahead of the much-anticipated lifting of the ban on women driving, one of the very causes for which many of the detained activists had campaigned. While some were quickly released, others remain imprisoned. They include Loujain al-Hathloul, Aziza al-Yousef, Eman al-Nafjan, Nouf Abdelaziz, Mayaa al-Zahrani, Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Saada, Hatoon al-Fassi, Shadan al-Onezi, and Amal al-Harbi. Credible reports indicate that Saudi interrogators tortured at least four of the women, including with electric shocks and whippings and sexual harassment and assault.

In the Philippines, Senator Leila de Lima, a brave champion of human rights, launched an investigation into extrajudicial executions that began shortly after President Duterte took office in 2016. As one of the only leaders bold enough to oppose President Duterte's "war on drugs," she has faced prolonged arbitrary detention, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. President Duterte has sought to silence her courageous voice as she spoke out against widespread human rights violations, including thousands of extrajudicial executions of mostly poor and marginalized people.

In Egypt, Hanan Badr el-Din, a human rights defender and cofounder of the Families of the Forcibly Disappeared Association, was detained on May 6, 2017, at Qanatar prison while visiting an individual who had been forcibly disappeared. She started her activism following the forced disappearance of her husband in 2013. She suffers from a serious genetic disorder, and her health is rapidly deteriorating.

China is responsible for some of the most grave human rights abuses, including of women. China has imprisoned hundreds of thousands of Uighur women in detention camps across its northwest region. These women are forced to renounce their Muslim religion and Uighur language and memorize Chinese propaganda. Forced labor, torture, and death are common. Thousands of children have been separated from their mothers and fathers and placed in a separate network of orphanages. One husband of a Uighur woman told Human Rights Watch: "My wife was about to go back overseas but they took her passport. And when she went to ask to get her passport back, they told her she needs to be subjected to political education for 10 days, and then they would let her go. That was on July 20, 2017. Since then, she's been in a political education camp." The family of Guligeina Tashimaimaiti, a Uighur PhD student who was last seen in December 2017 when she returned from studying in Malaysia, for example, fears she is in detention and at risk of torture and other ill treatment.

China has also targeted Tibetan Buddhist nuns. The government expelled hundreds of nuns in 2017 from Larung Gar in Sichuan, the world's largest Tibetan Buddhist center. Their homes were demolished; they were barred from entering other monasteries, and faced detention, harassment, and abuse.

In Eritrea, Aster Fissehatsion has been held incommunicado without charge or trial since September 2001. Her whereabouts, 17 years later, are still not known. Aster Fissehatsion was arrested together with 10 other members of a group of political dissidents known as the Group of 15, or G-15, including her former husband, former Vice President and foreign minister of Eritrea, Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo.

Perhaps, most tragically, this is just a snapshot of some of the brave women who dare to speak up for fundamental rights and values.

So on this International Women's Day, as we reflect on the achievements of women and reflect on the work that remains to be done, I call on all of us to redouble our efforts to free women political prisoners. Governments have the responsibility to promote the safety, well-being, and fundamental rights of their citizens. I call on governments who are unjustly detaining, harassing, and torturing women for exercising their fundamental rights to immediately release these politically motivated detentions. As they continue to struggle, let us all take up the mantle of their cause.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING MIAMI TOUR COMPANY

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies the unique American entrepreneurial spirit. Today, it is my distinct pleasure to name Miami Tour Company as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 2002, Miami Tour Company has quickly become a premier provider of tours and activities in south Florida. Husband and wife, Gus and Michelle Moore, founded the company based on the principle of providing the best customer experience possible. Gus and Michelle met while working at a restaurant and bonded over a shared passion for making sure that visitors to their home State have a great experience. After serving thousands of hungry patrons and learning how to make visitors to Miami as happy as possible, Gus and Michelle decided to start a business. With their combined knowledge of the area and a knack for anticipating their customer's needs, a tour company was the perfect fit. With their savings from working at the restaurant, the couple