

have a standard of “student achievement,” Congress could more clearly require that accreditors measure whether students are both learning and succeeding, but leave the specific ways of measuring those to accreditors and institutions.

Our goal needs to be to help students know that their degrees are going to be worth their time and money and to help taxpayers know that the federal government isn’t financing programs that do not provide students with a valuable education.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, 30 years ago today, the Whistleblower Protection Act was signed into law. To call it a triumph doesn’t do justice to the sheer number of years and people it took on both sides of the aisle to overcome numerous obstacles and enact Federal protections for Federal Government employees who step forward and do what we all should do: expose wrongdoings in order to hold government officials and agencies accountable.

Congressional efforts to protect whistleblowers date back to at least 1912 with the enactment of the Lloyd-La Follette Act. This act guaranteed the right of Federal employees to communicate with Members of Congress without the oversight of their employer and prohibited compensation to managers who retaliated against employees attempting to disclose whistleblower matters.

However, empowering Federal employees to speak up and speak the truth was and continues to be an ongoing struggle, one that has often pitted Congress against the executive branch. When President George H.W. Bush signed the Whistleblower Protection Act into law that April morning in 1989, it came after his predecessor President Ronald Reagan had vetoed a similar bill despite the fact that it had been unanimously adopted by both the Senate and the House.

The Whistleblower Protection Act, itself, was first introduced by Representative Pat Schroeder of Colorado as an amendment to the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and then as a standalone bill in 1982. The principal purpose of the bill was to block retaliation against employees who came forward, a never-ending problem. The bill would have allowed “a person claiming to be aggrieved by a prohibited personnel practice to: (1) bring a civil action in a U.S. district court against the employee or agency involved (respondent); or (2) seek corrective action through the (Merit Systems Protection) Board.”

While that particular bill ultimately died after receiving unfavorable comments from the U.S. Government Accountability Office—GAO—and the Merit Systems Protection Board, which adjudicates whistleblower complaints, its failure didn’t deter our colleagues.

By the time 1989 rolled around, Members of both the House and the Senate,

including Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, who spearheaded efforts in the Senate, had worked together for years to find a compromise and pass legislation that protected those employees whose disclosures revealed waste, fraud, or abuse. Between May of 1982 and September of 1989, 28 bills and resolutions with whistleblower protections built into them were introduced, many of them with dozens and dozens of co-sponsors.

Since the passage of the Whistleblower Protection Act 30 years ago, Congress has continued to improve protections for whistleblowers, notably with the passage of the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act of 1998; the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012; the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017; and more recently the Dr. Chris Kirkpatrick Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017.

Unfortunately, despite all of these efforts, becoming a whistleblower is still a perilous path. In its latest budget justification, the Office of Special Counsel, the agency that investigates retaliation against Federal whistleblowers, reported that, in fiscal year 2018, that agency received over 4,100 complaints of retaliation, otherwise known as prohibited personnel practices. This, according to OSC, is a new agency record. That is not a record that anyone should be proud of.

As much as today is a celebration of the Whistleblower Protection Act and the work of the many people it took to make those protections law, it is a greater celebration of the courage whistleblowers embody when they step forward to shine a light on waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in the government. Their bravery and sacrifice is invaluable, and for that, we thank them. Unfortunately, coming forward to do what is right still requires too much of both.

Consequently, Congress still has more work to do to protect whistleblowers, and I call on my colleagues to remember the value of citizens being able to blow the whistle. As Representative Schroeder said early on in her efforts to help whistleblowers: “If we in Congress are going to act as effective checks on excesses in the executive branch, we have to hear about such matters.”

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ROTARY CLUB OF CASPER CENTENNIA CELEBRATION

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the Centennial of the Rotary Club of Casper, Wyoming, a club which holds special importance for my wife, Bobbi and me.

On Saturday, May 4, 2019, the Rotary Club of Casper will recognize their 100th anniversary at a special celebration. Rotary organized in Casper, WY

on March 12, 1919, just 14 years after the first Rotary club was formed in Chicago, and 28 years after Wyoming’s admission to the Union.

At a luncheon on March 12, 1919, 15 businessmen, representing all walks of Casper life, met and elected their leadership—President James T. Gratiot, Directors Loui McMahon, Steve Starrett, George Nelson, Billy Johnson, Carl Shumaker, and Otis Walker. With a shared mission and sense of duty, these charter members laid the groundwork for a century to come.

The Casper Daily Tribune noted Rotary’s founding in an article the following day, March 13, 1919, “The purpose of the club is to encourage business and social relations and its by-laws define the policies of the club in a way that marks various departures from other clubs or societies.” With this in mind, the club hit the ground running, impacting the Casper community in positive and distinct ways.

Within their first years of forming, Casper Rotary’s commitment to the community was proven and acknowledged. As early as 1920–21, with memories of WWI fresh in their minds, they voted to support and donate funds to the construction of an air base near Casper. This air base, established in 1942, would come to fruition as the Casper Army Air Field. Governor Bryant B. Brooks, who would join the club and become president, noticed their initiative and addressed the club early on. This began a pattern with the club hosting a great number of Wyoming Governors, U.S. Senators and Congressmen, and local officials.

The Rotary Club of Casper always realized the importance of the youth of their community. From the beginning, the club sponsored the Boy and Girl Scouts. They established a student loan fund for students wishing to further their education and engaged with high school students to encourage their ambition. They were part of the effort to bring a junior college to Casper, lobbying the State legislature in Cheyenne. Their efforts were rewarded in 1945, when Casper College was established as Wyoming’s first junior college.

Countless dollars and volunteer hours were donated and continue to be given to the creation of parks, camps, playgrounds, and swimming pools for the community. The most well-known is Rotary Park on Casper Mountain. Popular since the early 1940s, Rotary Park contains the picturesque Garden Creek Falls and Bridle Trail. Additionally, each August, Rotary helps host Casper’s Riverfest and the Great Duck Derby. Rubber ducks fill the North Platte River with the proceeds going to the area’s trail systems. The club’s continuing engagement and investment in future projects ensure these areas are enjoyed for generations to come.

The history of Casper’s Rotary Club is a microcosm of the history of Casper. Professionals encompassing the