

served there until he received an honorable discharge that brought the couple home to Kenton County.

Using his degree in social studies, Dan taught history for a short time in Northern Kentucky. Then, a few years later, Dan and his brother Mike started a small concrete company out of their basements. For nearly four decades, Mike and Dan grew their business and earned respect in Northern Kentucky and the greater region as full service concrete contractors. In 2008, the brothers sold their business to Dan's son, Chris, who runs the company to this day.

The family business isn't the only way Chris has followed his father's footsteps, however. After graduating from The Citadel, Chris served 4 years in the Army as an infantry officer. Today, he is continuing to serve the Bluegrass State as a prominent member of the Kentucky State Senate. Like so many veterans, both Dan and Chris continue to make lasting contributions to their community, our Commonwealth, and this great Nation.

So, on this Veterans Day, I am grateful to all those who served our country in uniform. Our Commonwealth is made safer because of their service and stronger because of their example. To Dan and Chris McDaniel, all Kentucky veterans, and their families, it is an honor to say thank you.

#### TRIBUTE TO KATHLEEN OTT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I want to recognize Kathleen "Kathy" Ott, who recently retired from her role as the Director of the Library of Congress' Congressional Relations Office after 11 years of dedicated service to the Library and to Congress.

Appointed in 2008 by former Librarian of Congress, Dr. James Billington, Kathy was sought after by the Library for her extensive experience interfacing with Congress from both the public and private sectors. As the director of the Library's Congressional Relations Office, she spent more than a decade of her career building strong bipartisan relationships between the Library, Congress, and congressional staff.

Kathy has had the privilege of serving two Librarians of Congress, Dr. James Billington and Dr. Carla D. Hayden. Kathy was instrumental in supporting Dr. Hayden's confirmation process. With the help of Kathy's tireless effort throughout the nomination process, Dr. Hayden was overwhelmingly confirmed in a bipartisan fashion by the Senate during the 114th Congress.

In her time at the Library, Kathy has shaped the Library's relationship with Congress through 3 Presidential administrations, 6 Congresses, and 11 budget and appropriations cycles, building bipartisan support for Library of Congress initiatives along the way. Additionally, she worked with 10 different chairs of the Senate Rules and Admin-

istration Committee and House Administration Committee. As a member of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, I always appreciated Kathy's thorough and dutiful commitment to her role, the Library, and Congress.

During her tenure, Kathy has welcomed nearly 500 new Members of Congress during their freshman orientation activities hosted at the Library. She also created the bipartisan Library of Congress Caucus in the 111th Congress, which currently has 84 Representatives. Moreover, she helped to coordinate the congressional participation in the award of the Library's Gershwin Prize for Popular Song to the likes of Sir Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, Smokey Robinson, as well as other noteworthy musical artists.

In her position, Kathy also played an integral role in the launch of the Library's popular Congressional Dialogue Dinner Series in 2013, which has just concluded its 45th dinner. Marcelle and I have had the pleasure of enjoying many wonderful nights at the Library attending these delightful dinners and discussions.

Marcelle and I have had so many wonderful experiences with Kathy. I have to mention one especially. When Pope Francis came to speak to a joint meeting of Congress, Kathy had arranged to have a special Bible from the Library's collection available to be blessed by the Pope. She knew the Pope would bless it, so she arranged to have with it several religious medals and other things important to her and her family available to be a part of the blessing. I know the Pope didn't mind, and those of us there thought, "This is why we think the world of her."

Kathy has always been known as a reliable and trusted source for Library of Congress information. She will be greatly missed by Members of Congress and congressional staff alike. Marcelle and I wish Kathy the best in retirement.

#### BAT WEEK

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, in the midst of fall celebrations such as Halloween or, for fans in Washington and Houston, the World Series, I want to take a moment to highlight another important annual celebration that occurred last week: Bat Week.

It is fitting that last week, the Senate approved an appropriations bill to fund the Fish and Wildlife Service. At this time each year, we join our friends at the Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation groups around the world, and bat enthusiasts to recognize the irreplaceable role of bats and to highlight our urgent fight to protect them.

Many do not know the profound impact that bats have on our environment and our economy. For an agricultural state like Vermont, bats are vital to both our ecosystem and our economy. They control pests, pollinate crops, and even spread seeds. Some

farmers would consider bats among their best friends. For years, I have worked on the Appropriations Committee to prioritize funding for habitat conservation and to stop the spread of white-nose syndrome. I am proud that the fiscal year 2020 Interior bill once again responds to the call of the bat signal and provides more than \$7 million to combat white-nose, a disease that has devastated bat communities across the country.

So once again I hope Senators will join me in recognizing the importance of bat and keep the advocacy behind Bat Week going throughout the year.

#### RECOGNIZING VERMONT'S MAPLE INDUSTRY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, Vermont sets the gold standard for the maple industry, and maple is integral to our State's economy and to our State's identity. The Vermont families and businesses that keep this sector vibrant and viable are also an essential part of the fabric of our State. I am proud to recognize one of those businesses today. Nestled along the western slopes of Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, Runamok Maple is one of the roughly 1500 sugar producers in Vermont that produce nearly half of the Nation's maple syrup. Owned and operated by Laura and Eric Sorkin, Runamok Maple exemplifies the innovation and entrepreneurship that is revitalizing communities across Vermont.

Maple sugaring is a tradition carried forward and refined by each new generation of Vermonsters. The Sorkins themselves benefited from the mentorship of nearby sugar producers before launching their own business a decade ago. In 2016, recognizing an opportunity, they pumped money and energy into a diversification effort that included a retail line of flavor-infused and barrel-aged syrups, all packaged and branded for the direct sales market. Two years later, I was proud to support funding for the Northern Border Regional Commission that in turn allowed Fairfax, VT, to expand wastewater infrastructure to Runamok's new manufacturing home, an old facility that once manufactured Scrabble game tiles. The improvements enabled Runamok's expansion from 45 to 100 employees and revitalized a part of the historic town.

Through their products, writings, and creativity, the Sorkins and their outstanding staff are not only producing world-class value-added products, they are changing how people think about maple syrup. Long gone are the days when it was considered a mere condiment for pancakes. I was not surprised, then, to see Runamok Maple featured in a recent Washington Post article about the many possibilities of Vermont's sweetest export.

In recognition of the families across our State who continue to keep this bedrock Vermont sector thriving, I ask