

this Navy SEAL served our Nation for 23 years. And after combat, Scott returned to Helena, MT, but, unfortunately, the invisible wounds of war followed him right back home.

He was open about his journey to recovery, getting involved in the Montana chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and using animal therapy and programs at Montana Wild. But, unfortunately—and I know his family is watching right now—on February 25, 2018, Scott succumbed to the wounds of war that caused his mental illness.

As Chairman MORAN has pointed out, this bill honors his legacy by supporting the kinds of programs that helped improve Commander Hannon's quality of life by expanding our understanding of mental health conditions and the treatments that may have made diagnosing the conditions easier.

I am not going to go into everything the bill does because Senator MORAN did a fine job on that. All I can say is that we have a great VA Committee in this U.S. Senate. It is a committee that works to get things done in a bipartisan way.

I have had the honor of serving with JOHNNY ISAKSON as chairman and now with Chairman MORAN, and we haven't missed a step. We continue to work together to support our veterans across this country.

There is no better way of supporting our veterans than to pass this bill, which is what we just did in the U.S. Senate about 2 minutes ago.

The bottom line is this: This isn't the final bill we are going to pass out of the U.S. Senate dealing with veterans. We have plenty more. In fact, I think we passed a dozen bills in the VA Committee today, dealing with a myriad of different issues that impact our veterans in this country. The bottom line is that today we can be proud. We can be proud of Senators in the U.S. Senate for doing something that needed to be done that is going to help our veterans and move this country forward.

I am going to close by going where I started, and that is to say thank you, Senator MORAN. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your trust. It is great working with you, and I look forward to doing many more good things before this Congress ends.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, let me extend the courtesies that were extended to me by the Senator from Montana, Mr. TESTER.

It has been a privilege to work with him on this and many other issues—many of them related to our Nation's service men and women and those who served and are now veterans.

I appreciate that Senator TESTER and I have the ability to work together to resolve differences and find common ground for the benefit of those who have served.

Before I conclude my comments this evening, I would use this as a moment—on behalf of the Presiding Officer, on behalf of Senator TESTER and me, and on behalf of all Members of the U.S. Senate—to express our gratitude to all who have served our country and express our respects and honor for those who are no longer with us, who, because of those battle wounds, have lost their lives to suicide.

We express our condolences and sympathies to their family members and to their friends, and, in each and every instance, we recognize what sacrifice they have made for the benefit of each and every one of us here today and across the country.

I would say to those family members that this legislation—we hope—and the example that their loved ones demonstrated in their lives will be something that will inspire us to do the right thing and care for those who served. So I express my condolence and sympathies to the families, and I thank all who served, and I do so on behalf of all Members of the U.S. Senate.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the many dedicated staff members who helped this legislation through to this point: Emily Blair, who is with us on the Senate floor tonight, Tiffanii Woolfolk, Mark Crowley, Asher Allman, Scott Nulty, Pat McGuigan, David Shearman, and Caroline Canfield.

In addition, thank you to Senator TESTER's staff: Sophie Friedl, Dahlia Melendrez, and Tony McClain, the Kansas, as well as the House Veterans' Affairs Committee staff members.

Suicide is preventable, and with the passage of Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act tonight—here, moments ago—we take a stand to protect the lives of the people who have given us so much in their protection of each and every American.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO PUTNAM "PUT" BLODGETT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Putnam "Put" Blodgett's lifetime of service to the Vermont forest industry deserves special recognition. Put personified the essence, values, and traditions of what makes Vermont special.

Put's family moved to a Bradford, VT, dairy farm during the height of the Great Depression. He attended Dartmouth College and returned home in 1953 to work on the family farm, which he eventually took over and continued to steward with his wife and children. Put left the dairy business for other endeavors but maintained his connection to the family land, working tirelessly to restore and manage its 700-acre wood lot. Always focused on long-term sustainable management, Put placed the acreage in conservation with the Upper Valley Land Trust, preserving the forest for all generations. Put's son now manages the forest, continuing that legacy.

Put and his wife, Marilyn, ran the Challenge Wilderness Camp, teaching children about nature and guiding them on wilderness pursuits. Children would travel from cities to live in an Adirondack shelter, cook over an open fire, learn to canoe, and explore the forest. Put's goal was to assist young people on their journey to adulthood, cultivating their connection with the natural world. Watching our own children and grandchildren play in woods and fields of our farm in Middlesex, VT, Marcelle and I know how crucial it is for children to have the experience in nature that Put and Marilyn provided to so many.

A true leader in Vermont's conservation and forestry community, Put was the longstanding president of Vermont Woodlands Association and oversaw the Tree Farm Program. He was recognized twice as Vermont's Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. Our farm in Middlesex has been enrolled in the Tree Farm Program for about 30 years, and I am deeply appreciative of the value the program has brought to my land and to Vermont.

Forest management discussions can be a tense tug-of-war between environmentalism and timber management, but Put didn't see it that way. He understood conservation as a shared priority—a public and private good alike—and he worked to unite divergent stakeholders around this common interest. I looked to Put for advice when writing Vermont wilderness legislation and Put was a founding member of the Vermont Natural Resources Council's Forest Roundtable, an open forum for Vermonters to exchange information and recommend conservation policy. On many occasions, Put helped opposing sides find that elusive common ground on forest management policy.

Putnam Blodgett, as any true forester, worked with a mission to be accomplished on a timeframe much longer than his own life span or a single generation. Put passed away earlier this year, and yet I take comfort knowing that the Green Mountains of Vermont are better for his work here. To the great benefit of my grandchildren and many generations to come, Put's legacy lives in the Northern Forest.

RECOGNIZING THE STAFF OF ECHO, THE LEAHY CENTER FOR LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as the coronavirus pandemic continues and in some places worsens, every business and public institution faces significant challenges. These entities must make hard choices, adapt quickly, and ultimately find the balance between the safety of their employees and those they serve and their ability to keep their doors open. The leadership and staff of one Vermont nonprofit, ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, has been a model of perseverance, creativity, and commitment to serving

the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding creative ways to bring their important programing and resources to the public.

The center, located in Burlington, VT is dedicated to educating people of all ages and abilities about science, the natural environment, and the importance of protecting the Lake Champlain watershed and others like it. Recognizing the importance of equitable access to achieving this mission, the center utilizes several programs that break down financial barriers to its facilities and ensures that these educational opportunities are available to all. Most years see more than 167,000 visitors to this award-winning, LEED-certified facility on the Burlington shores of Lake Champlain. Visitors of all ages come to experience over 100 interactive exhibits and 70 different species of fish, amphibians, and reptiles that inhabit the ecosystem we call home.

When COVID-19 began to spread throughout the northeast, the center, like so many businesses and facilities, was forced to close its doors to the public. But though they were unable to welcome visitors into the physical location, the center's dedicated staff were undeterred. After closing their doors on March 14, the staff drew on their considerable skills to quickly adapt to the new remote environment, offering a range of online learning tools, including educational videos, instructions for at-home science experiments, and live video feeds of animal exhibits in order to support local schools and families. They even continued remote programming for adults, including legislative updates on water quality work through the Clean Water Network and an LGBTQIA panel discussion during Pride Week. Some staff took it upon themselves, wearing masks of course, to stealthily clean out the shelves of the gift shop and set up remote centers of commerce from their own homes. Animal care staff reported to work without interruption, and the turtles and fish and frogs that call ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain home, thrived, all while missing their human visitors.

Having helped with our State's great success in curtailing the spread of the virus, ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain reopened to members on June 29 and to all guests on July 4, with extensive health and sanitary guidelines in place. Just as they were reopening, the center even hosted a wedding on just a few minutes notice, after staff spotted a well-dressed couple looking for a spot on the Burlington waterfront and invited them in for the ceremony.

Lake Champlain is one of Vermont's greatest natural treasures, and it has always been a priority of mine to preserve its beauty and the ecosystem it supports, which in turn provides an irreplaceable foundation for our state's economy. I am proud that all Vermonters can look to ECHO, Leahy

Center for Lake Champlain for opportunities to instill a passion for scientific discovery, preservation of natural resources, and stewardship of the Lake Champlain basin in the hearts and minds people young and old, even during a pandemic. I especially thank the staff at the center for their resilience, adaptability, innovation, and unwavering commitment to continuing this important work.

RECOGNIZING KING ARTHUR FLOUR

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize a storied Vermont business, King Arthur Flour of Norwich, VT, for their accomplishments over the years and their commitment to serving the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost as old as the United States itself, this company was established in 1790, just 1 year into George Washington's Presidency. It began in Boston, with Henry Wood importing high-quality flour from England, and has evolved into a nationally recognized resource for home bakers and a beloved Vermont company. In 1984, King Arthur Flour moved to Norwich, where the business grew rapidly. Today, the brand is ranked second in the Nation for overall flour sales. But the rise to fame doesn't mean they abandoned the Arthurian principles that their name was inspired by.

In 2004, the family business was officially sold to its employees. Such an act demonstrates the high value the company places on their community and their employees. They also continue to source entirely from American farms, to ensure high-quality production and to support a sustainable agricultural economy. As always, they guarantee quality and purity by promising their customers products free of bleach, bromate, or any artificial preservatives. Through their commitment to their employees, the community, and to delivering high-quality, responsibly sourced products, this company truly demonstrates the values and character of a Vermont business.

King Arthur Flour further confirmed their commitment to serving and engaging with the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March of this year, Americans were ordered to stay home to slow the spread of the virus. This led millions of Americans to begin baking at unprecedented rates. It was not uncommon to visit a grocery store this spring and see the empty shelves in the baking aisle. Like many other essential services, King Arthur was tasked with the need to fulfill a rising demand, while also keeping their employees safe. True to their character, King Arthur stepped up and did just that. Not only did they get their products to consumers, they continued to staff the Baker's Hotline. For the last

several decades, King Arthur has been about more than just selling products; they also want to educate and connect with people. Inundated with calls and social media engagement from home bakers, the company's baking instructors, whose jobs were put on hold, began answering the Baker's Hotline and managing the high quantity of social media interactions.

When the country needed an at-home pastime, King Arthur Flour answered the call. I have visited their flagship store in the past and can attest to the quality of their products and services. I applaud them for their commitment to serving the national community during such uncertain times. King Arthur Flour truly exemplifies what it means to be a Vermont business and deserves enormous praise. Marcelle and I visit their plant often in Norwich, and I am so proud of all they have accomplished. King Arthur's story during the pandemic was recently covered by Melissa Pasanen of the Vermont newspaper *Seven Days*, and I request that excerpts of this article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From *Seven Days*, June 23, 2020]

HOW THE PANDEMIC PROPELLED KING ARTHUR FLOUR INTO THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT
(By Melissa Pasanen)

Laurie Furch, a former bakery owner, has answered calls for the King Arthur Flour Baker's Hotline for almost six years. Every shift, she handles dozens of questions from anxious bakers. She's used to troubleshooting problems such as Why are my cookies taking an hour to bake? Or, Can I substitute all-purpose flour for bread flour?

But not even the holiday baking season and its deluge of calls prepared Furch and her teammates for the tsunami of home baking appeals that struck the weekend of March 14. That Sunday, the hotline handled a 50 percent spike in calls.

As the coronavirus pandemic shut businesses and schools, and shelter-in-place orders rolled out nationwide, homebound Americans were baking at an unprecedented rate—and they needed help.

Millions of those bakers turned to Norwich, Vt.-based King Arthur for advice—and for flour to fuel the new national pastime.

The crescendo of phone calls was something the company could handle by redeploying staff from its temporarily shuttered baking education center and retail operation. Addressing a nationwide run on flour that left grocery store shelves bare was a bigger challenge.

"Not only were people all learning how to bake," Furch said, "then Americans decided they all needed flour at the same time."

King Arthur started as a regional New England brand and eventually developed national distribution for its products. In recent years, when customers from Florida or California emailed to ask where to buy the flour, they could be referred to a nearby supermarket.

The pandemic changed that—and shone a national spotlight on a beloved Vermont company and how it does business.

It's a welcome story that demonstrates nice guys can finish first.

"THE NEW HOT CATEGORY"

Normally, the flour business is pretty sleepy and doesn't tend to grab headlines.