

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