

By the end of 2013, nonfarm employment was an anemic 1.9 percent higher than it had been at the end of the year in 2009. In contrast, the oil and gas sector's employment was 16 percent higher. While the rest of the economy was stuck in the mud, the oil and gas sector was growing and creating American jobs. That robust job growth helped make America energy independent and secure.

You would think that the lessons from the failed 2009 stimulus and the U.S. energy boom would be obvious and would be repeated today, but the Biden administration seems blinded by the Solyndra syndrome. President Biden wants to use the exact same playbook now and this time with a much heftier pricetag.

The President wants to spend trillions of dollars, not just billions. Included in that spending would be hundreds of billions of dollars in green job training programs, green energy financing, increased high-speed rail, new electric vehicles. It is the same plan that failed under President Obama.

At the same time the Biden administration is recycling the farfetched so-called jobs plan, the Biden administration is attacking oil and gas jobs—good jobs that people have today.

On his first day in office, President Biden signed an Executive order to kill the Keystone XL Pipeline. Now, this eliminated the prospect of 11,000 American jobs. Making matters worse, President Biden implemented a ban on new oil and gas production on public lands, a huge impact on my home State of Wyoming. A permanent ban on oil and gas leasing on Federal lands could destroy up to 1 million jobs across America.

My report finds the Biden administration is pushing expensive fantasy jobs and killing real ones at a time that America cannot afford to lose these jobs. It is a recipe for repeated disaster.

We all remember how President Obama promised shovel-ready jobs, and he then later admitted that the jobs weren't coming, as he said, because "shovel-ready was not as shovel-ready as we expected."

We know we can expect the same thing this time. The expensive, wasteful job-killing Solyndra syndrome is back. It was a terrible idea in 2009. And here we are a dozen years later, once again, spending a lot more, and doing that on the same bad ideas is now even worse than before.

I yield the floor.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

#### REMEMBERING CLAIRE SERDIUK ANDERSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last month, we lost a generous and beautiful soul with the passing of Claire Serdiuk Anderson. Claire devoted her life to public service. During her 46

years on this Earth, she changed it for the better. As an Illinois native, she advocated for candidates and causes that pushed our State and country to be more like her: kind, gentle, and accepting.

Claire was driven, in part, by her Catholic faith. She believed in her sacred responsibility to help others, and she encouraged her friends and family to do the same, with a warm smile and a loving heart.

Anyone would have been lucky to sit in the same room as Claire. She would captivate any audience with her gifts as a storyteller and her instincts as a comedian. In addition to graduating summa cum laude from Loyola University, Claire also studied at another venerated Chicago institution: The Second City Comedy Club. She used to say that her background in comedy and improvisation prepared her well for a career in politics. And I can think of more than a few politicians who would be lucky to have half of her charm and charisma.

Claire played key roles in the careers of President Obama and other national leaders. She was the financial director for his first campaign for U.S. Senate. Claire also raised funds for my friend and colleague Senator DUCKWORTH when she first ran for Congress. In both instances, Claire was there from the beginning, investing her time, talent, and passion into two candidates who would go on to make history and inspire a new generation of American leaders.

I came to know Claire during the early 2000s, when she worked in my Chicago office as my State scheduler. As part of my team, she was beloved for her tenacity and her good cheer. In her eternal wisdom, she left my office in 2004 to help a skinny community organizer in the South Side run for Senate but she remained, always, a treasured member of the extended Team Durbin.

In her final act of charity, Claire donated her organs and tissues. I would like to think that, right now, someone may be seeing the world through Claire's wise eyes, perceiving all the possibilities for our future, rather than settling for the ways things are today.

I hope all of us can learn from Claire's example. Loretta and I join her husband Kurt, her son Henry, her parents Yvonne and Matthew, her brother Andrew, and everyone in her extended family, and so many friends, in mourning Claire's loss.

Thank you for your loving service, Claire. We will miss you.

#### REMEMBERING ERNIE WEST

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the Bluegrass State is home to many heroes. For centuries, brave Kentuckians have proudly worn the uniform to defend our country and our way of life. Earlier this month, we said goodbye to one of these remarkable individuals. Ernie West, of Greenup County, was

recognized in 1954 for his courage in the Korean war with our country's top military recognition, the Medal of Honor. He inspired those who knew him and became an example of our Commonwealth's highest ideals. Today, I would like to join Ernie's admirers in paying tribute to his incredible life and offering condolences to his family.

For Ernie, who came from humble beginnings in a children's home, putting his fellow soldiers' safety before his own was practically second nature. During a patrol, his squad was ambushed by North Korean fighters. Ernie sprang into action, braving enemy grenades and intense fire to carry three wounded comrades to safety. As he did, the young private suffered serious wounds, including taking shrapnel that eventually cost him his eye.

After the war, President Dwight D. Eisenhower presented Ernie with the Medal of Honor in recognition of his valor and selfless sacrifice. Ernie never considered himself a hero and almost refused to accept the medal. He believed everyone who served with him was deserving of the same honor. In the years that followed, Ernie became a proud example of service to a cause larger than oneself. Kentucky was grateful to have this hero among us for so many years, and we will all miss him.

Mr. President, the Daily Independent in nearby Ashland paid tribute to Ernie West and his heroism. I ask unanimous consent the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Daily Independent, May 2, 2021]

#### A HERO'S LEGACY: WEST DIES AT 89

(By Charles Romans)

A young boy came home one day to find his father talking to a man he did not know. His father's companion was rather ordinary, the young boy remembered, and appeared to be just like any of his neighbors he saw on a daily basis. But the father spoke up and said, "Do you know this man? He's a war hero." Those words changed the young boy's opinion of the man, and he became fascinated with learning the man's story. But the man just smiled and quickly changed the subject, asking the young boy instead where he liked to fish.

The young boy was Tom Clay, of Greenup, and the man his father (well-known writer and community activist Soc Clay) introduced him to was Ernest "Ernie" West. Clay remembers West as being a plainspeaking and easygoing man, and not at all what one might expect from a war hero. Clay said you'd expect a war hero to be larger than life, big and bold, but West wasn't any of those things.

"He was just a normal guy," Clay said. "One of the neighbors who really liked to fish." But even though West was hesitant to speak of it, Clay would later learn that West was not only a hero, but also a hero to whom other heroes looked as the very definition of the word. West died on Saturday at age 89.

The man who talked so readily about fishing at the Clay home was a Greenup County native himself. He was born on Sept. 2, 1931 in Russell and raised in an orphanage at the Methodist Children's Home in Versailles.

West lived in Wurtland and worked on what is now CSX Railroad. He was drafted in 1950, and in October 1952 he was serving as private first class with Company L, 14th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division in Korea. During a patrol, West's unit was ambushed and took heavy casualties.

Unit commander Captain George Gividen was seriously wounded, and West ordered those not wounded to retreat from the enemy's larger force. West himself, however, didn't retreat, but instead repeatedly faced a hailstorm of enemy fire and grenades to rescue the wounded members of his unit and carry them to safety. And in numerous cases, West faced not only area fire but personal attacks as well while rescuing his comrades. At one point, West was carrying his commander, while returning fire with both his own and his commander's weapon. And though he said he wasn't aware of when it happened, West became one of the walking wounded himself, sustaining wounds that would cost him an eye. But, in typical fashion, when people referred to him as a hero, West simply responded, "They were all my brothers. Any of us would have done it because you don't leave your brothers behind."

For his actions on that day, West received numerous medals, chiefly the Medal of Honor, which was presented by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Again, true to form, West said, "I turned it down at first. I thought everybody deserved a medal." But he did accept the medal on Jan. 29, 1954, though he was still reluctant to speak much of his time at war. And it was obvious that West desired first and foremost to return home and continue with his life. Fortunately for West, he was able to do just that, by marrying and starting a family, and even returned to his job at the railroad.

"He was one great man," said AMV Commander Lori Grizzle, a friend who worked with West at the railroad. "Our post is named after him, and there are memorials to him at the post."

But as much as West the hero, Grizzle says she misses her friend.

"He was just such a nice person," she said. "He was funny and nice to be around. And he was always pleasant to everyone."

Grizzle said West didn't really want to talk about himself, and while she and her husband worked with him on the railroad, he was very humble and didn't talk about his service.

"But his wife persuaded him to talk to schools because she thought that kids needed to know. And he was always great about speaking to the kids about what it takes sometimes to keep our country safe. It was the last thing he wanted to talk about," Grizzle said. "But she convinced him, and he never hesitated then to speak to the kids. He will be dearly missed."

West also was immortalized in a painting that now hangs in the Greenup County Courthouse. A committee comprised of Soc Clay, Tom Crump and Emily Cantrell Stephenson commissioned a painting from Greenup High School art teacher Brian Moser, and then sold prints of the painting signed by West, with the proceeds going toward a scholarship for seniors at Greenup County, Raceland, and Russell. The scholarship will continue, and Clay said that it has quite a large impact on the students.

The official citation of West's Medal of Honor reads:

"Pfc. West distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy. He voluntarily accompanied a contingent to locate and destroy a reported enemy outpost. Nearing the objective, the patrol was ambushed and suffered numerous casualties. Observing his wounded leader lying in an exposed posi-

tion, Pfc. West ordered the troops to withdraw, then braved intense fire to reach and assist him.

While attempting evacuation, he was attacked by three hostile soldiers employing grenades and small arms fire. Quickly shifting his body to shelter the officer, he killed the assailants with his rifle, then carried the helpless man to safety. He was critically wounded and lost an eye in this action, but courageously returned through withering fire and bursting shells to assist the wounded. While evacuating two comrades, he closed with and killed three more of the foe. Pfc. West's indomitable spirit, consummate valor, and intrepid actions inspired all who observed him, reflect the highest credit on himself, and uphold the honored traditions of the military service."

Ernest "Ernie" Edison West is a shining example of how a common man can rise to the occasion and do uncommon things. His life both on active military duty and as a retired veteran is a testament of dedication to the community and country he loved. West passed from this life Sat., May 1, 2021, at the age of 89. But he will live on in the memory of a grateful community and thankful country.

#### TRIBUTE TO WENDY CURRAN

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Wendy Curran. Wendy will soon retire as vice president of care delivery and provider affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming. Her retirement marks the end of a remarkable career dedicated to improving the lives of people in my State.

Wendy Curran has been at the center of Wyoming health policy for over 30 years. She earned the trust of folks across the State with her broad knowledge of the challenges and opportunities for improving care in Wyoming. She forged alliances and friendships on both sides of the aisle, and both Republicans and Democrats respected Wendy's insights and relied on her unique knowledge.

As the daughter of a third-generation rancher, Wendy grew up on the Peryam Ranch in the Upper North Platte River Valley. During this time, spent riding horses and playing in the Encampment River, she learned lessons that would later contribute to her successful career. Daily chores taught her the value of hard work. She developed the ability to "heal up and hair over," a cowboy's term for resiliency. In fact, her grit, humility, and determination represent several of the key tenets in our State ethics code, the Code of the West: be tough, but fair; take pride in your work; do what has to be done.

Throughout her career, Wendy held many distinguished jobs at all levels of government. She began by working for U.S. Senator Cliff Hansen. Other members of Wyoming's congressional delegation also benefited from her work. Wendy served U.S. Congressman Dick Cheney and U.S. Senator Malcom Wallop as well.

In 1991, Wendy joined the Wyoming Medical Society. Wendy was the passionate voice of Wyoming physicians and patients, serving as the assistant

director of public affairs and later leading the organization as executive director. Wendy testified frequently before the Wyoming Legislature, advocating on behalf of Wyoming physicians and patients. She was known to introduce herself as a "representative to the people who save Wyoming residents' lives," a job she took very seriously. She worked on many important provider issues. In particular, she was the leading voice supporting medical liability reform.

Wendy was instrumental in Wyoming joining the organization now known as WWAMI. This acronym stands for the States it represents: Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. These States, working through the University of Washington Medical School, are part of a medical education consortium. This allows students in Wyoming to attend medical school at the University of Washington while participating in clerkships both in Wyoming and across the region. The program gives the students wide exposure to practicing medicine in rural communities. Wendy deserves credit for helping to bring this successful program to Wyoming, and she continues to serve on the University of Wyoming WWAMI curriculum review panel.

In 2005, Wendy left the Medical Society. Recognizing her skills, Governor Dave Freudenthal asked Wendy to serve in his administration. In this role, Wendy championed initiatives to improve childcare, substance abuse services, and an innovative Medicaid pilot program known as Healthy Frontiers. Her talents for creating health policy were so respected that she also helped incoming Governor Matt Mead during his administration's transition. That Freudenthal was a Democrat and Mead a Republican made no difference. Wendy proved yet again that partisan politics mattered far less than honoring her commitment to the people of Wyoming.

Wendy spent the last 10 years of her career working for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wyoming. In the midst of widespread reform and changes, Wendy remained committed to improving the State's health care system. Her excellent communication skills and well-established knowledge of the industry benefited her immensely. She embraced her role as a liaison between the insurance agency and providers, often bridging gaps and fostering connection. She ends her career as a trusted adviser to all in the health care industry.

In 2001, I was honored to join Wendy in the inaugural class of Leadership Wyoming, a program developed to inspire Wyoming's leaders through exploration and connection. Already an established leader in her own right, Wendy fully committed herself to the 8-month program and later became one of its most fervent supporters.

Wendy also lent her talents and expertise to the boards of numerous non-profit organizations. These included Peak Wellness Center, the Wyoming