

NATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 21st anniversary of National Literacy Day, designated on July 2, 1985, by President Ronald Reagan.

In 1986, Caryl Mackin-Wagner, the executive director for Focus on Literacy Inc., worked with Congress to establish recognition by a Senate resolution of a National Literacy Day, which Congress has honored each year since.

Caryl Mackin-Wagner established Focus on Literacy, Inc., to bring a greater awareness to the problem of illiteracy in our Nation and to promote effective ways to address this problem while improving the reading skills of children and adults in America.

Developing one's reading and writing skills is a necessary tool to succeeding in this world today. It is extremely important that Americans continue to advance in order to bring about a more successful nation as a whole. We must not ignore the fact that there are many individuals who are not well educated and who are not contributing to society in ways that they could. What is cause for concern is that with inadequate education, people don't reach their full potential and contribute all that they can to our Nation. On Sunday, July 2, Congress will recognize the significance of improving the literacy of individuals, which further contributes to the growth of our society.

Each year, Congress honors National Literacy Day to celebrate literary accomplishments, which have contributed to developing a better and more educated society. As Caryl Mackin-Wagner has said, "Illiterate individuals are our untapped resource for they possess underutilized talents and abilities."

Through hard work and a commitment to helping others, Focus on Literacy, Inc. has made remarkable strides in the battle for literacy and I am proud to salute its efforts on National Literacy Day.

2005 SLOAN AWARD WINNERS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the 2005 winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, which recognizes companies that have successfully used flexibility to meet both business and employee goals. The Sloan Awards are presented by the When Work Works initiative, which is a project of the Families and Work Institute in partnership with the Center for Workforce Preparation, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Twiga Foundation. The When Work Works initiative is sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

I would like to draw your attention to the Sloan Awards because I think these companies are to be commended for their excellence in providing workplace flexibility practices which ben-

efit both employees and employers. Achieving greater flexibility in the workplace—to maximize productivity while attracting the highest quality employees—is one of the key challenges facing American companies in the 21st century.

During the inaugural phase of the Sloan Awards in 2004-05, businesses in the following eight cities were eligible for recognition: Brooklyn, NY; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Durham, NC; Long Beach, CA; Providence, RI; and Salt Lake City, UT. The Chamber of Commerce in each city hosted an interactive business forum to share research on workplace flexibility as an important component of workplace effectiveness. In these same communities, businesses applied for, and winners were selected for, the Sloan Awards through a process that included employees' views as well as employer practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the inaugural winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility. These businesses are to be commended for their excellence in providing workplace flexibility.

In Long Beach, CA, the winners are Dun & Bradstreet, PeacePartners, Inc., and Ward's Furniture.

In Chicago, IL, the winner is Accenture.

In Detroit, MI, the winners are Accenture, Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company, Brogan & Partners Convergence Marketing, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Plexus Systems LLC, and Rossetti.

In Brooklyn, NY, the winner is Urban Monster.

In Durham, NC, the winners are the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau and Durham Family Court.

In Providence, RI, the winners are Atrion Networking Corporation, Citizens Financial Group, Inc., KPMG, LLP, North Star Marketing, Quality Partners of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc., and Sojourner House, Inc.

In Dallas, TX, the winners are Accenture, CareerLink Companies, Center for Housing Resources, Inc., Community Council of Greater Dallas, Lee Hecht Harrison, McQueary Henry Bowles Troy, LLP, Medical City Hospital, Texas Instruments, and TravisWolff & Company, LLP.

In Salt Lake City, UT, the winners are ARUP Laboratories, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, McKinnon-Mulherin, Inc., and Radius Engineering Inc.

2005 was the inaugural year for these awards. Building on the success of the first year, Phase II of the When Work Works initiative will extend the number of participating communities to 17 in 2006 and 24 in 2007. Again, I congratulate the 2005 winners and look forward to the expansion of this exciting initiative.

COMMENDING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESCUE TEAMS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the efforts and extraordinary dedication of the volunteer firefighters and emergency rescue teams throughout New Mexico who have been working tirelessly to assist in fighting fires and meeting the needs of citizens throughout the State as they cope with the worst fire season in decades.

It has already been an incredibly difficult fire season for the people of the Southwest. New Mexico is suffering a drought of historic proportions. The State spent the winter preparing for a summer fire season they hoped wouldn't happen. Unfortunately, the worst fears of the State are quickly becoming a reality. By the end of June, more than 100,000 acres of land will have burned and the State will have already faced more than 20 named fires and countless unnamed fires of varying size and intensity. Hundreds of people have been evacuated, property lost, and communities changed forever. Bear Paw, Rivera Mesa, Energen, Martinez, Skates, Bear, Eicks, Wilson, and Malpais, are the names of just a few of the large fires that the State has already faced this year.

Throughout this time I have been deeply impressed by the work of Federal, State, Tribal, and local fire fighters. But the work of these professionals would be impossible without the commitment of the volunteer firefighters and rescue teams who have unfailingly answered the call to service. These volunteers exemplify the best spirit of New Mexico. They have courageously worked the fire lines, offered their support and a shoulder to cry on, provided a bed and warm meal to evacuees, and helped to corral and move pets and livestock out of harm's way. They do all this while some of their own families and homes face the same fire danger. While I am not surprised at the selflessness of my fellow New Mexicans, I am forever grateful to these volunteers.

The work of these volunteer firefighters and rescue teams has been essential in meeting the challenges of a very active fire season. Throughout New Mexico volunteer firefighters and rescue teams have responded at all times of the day and night. Some have worked for many days in a row to ensure that all the needs of their community were met and the necessary resources were in place. Their bravery and selflessness has been an example to all New Mexicans, and I strongly commend them for their work.

I know that I am joined today by every New Mexican in saying thank you to our volunteer firefighters and rescue teams and in the hope for their continued safety in the face of the fire dangers they face.