of the next 300 years, a variety of programs designed to assist veterans were instituted by different administrative bodies. In 1930, all veterans programs were consolidated and placed under the jurisdiction of the Veterans' Administration. Finally, in 1988, President Reagan signed legislation creating the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is ''to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan,''—a quote from Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address. The Department has five core values: commitment, excellence, people, communication, and stewardship. By upholding these core values, the Department of Veterans Affairs seeks to fulfill its obligation to those who have served in defense of our Nation.

The men and women who work at the Department of Veterans Affairs constitute a group who are highly trained and deeply devoted to the goals of the organization. This is true across the board but in South Dakota particularly. The Black Hills Health Care System was designated a top performer in the Department's fiscal year 2005 Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients. Furthermore, the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center has a strong track record of top notch service. For example, Luella Onken, a local volunteer at the hospital, was the recipient of the 2006 First Premier Bank/Premier Bankcard Spirit of Volunteerism Award. She volunteers 5 days a week at the medical center and has devoted 35,000 hours toward helping our veterans.

For 75 years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has done an exemplary job of providing quality health care, administering benefits, and overseeing military cemeteries for the men and women who have served our country. I am proud to recognize and commend the Department of Veterans Affairs. The dedicated service of the men and women who work at the VA is a testament to the Department's commitment to our veterans.●

CONGRATULATORY NOTE ON KAZAKH AMBASSADOR'S BIRTHDAY

● Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today, July 18th, 2006, Ambassador Kanat Saudabayev from Kazakhstan is congratulated on his 60th birthday and recognized for all of his work around the world as a diplomat, government official, and culture and arts leader.

In his work with Washington since December 2000, Ambassador Saudabayev has helped to build a strong relationship with the United States on many levels. In 2001, Kazakhstan's positive support after terrorist attacks on September 11 helped extend the U.S. partnership on important issues such as energy policy, arms proliferation, the environment, and terrorism. In the past year, he and his country have helped to build positive economic and educational affiliations with Louisiana and also have graciously donated $50,000 to two local schools for rebuilding after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Serving in many important leadership positions before now, Ambassador Saudabayev was born in the Almaty region in 1946 and is now married to Kullikhan and is privileged to have two sons, a daughter, and three grandchildren. He has served as the head of the Prime Minister's Office in 1999 and 2000. In the 1990s he was appointed to serve as Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. He worked as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1994 for his state and signed for Kazakhstan in NATO's Partnership for Peace Agreement. In 1991, he served as Ambassador to Turkey, the last under Soviet order, and worked to create a new strong future for Kazakhstan in its international relationships.

Before his diplomatic ventures, Ambassador Saudabayev had a passion for and held many positions in Kazakhstan's focus on culture. Starting as a theatrical producer, Ambassador Saudabayev acted as chairman of the State Committee of Culture, chairman of the State Film Committee, and Deputy Culture Minister.

Besides his devoted nature in working with the United States and his homeland, the Ambassador's most impressive past will lead the United States to not only recognize him for his past contribution to the world but most likely also for his efforts to come.

We wish him Happy Birthday on this celebratory year and occasion along with many years of health and good fortune in his future.●

TRIBUTE TO SHARON DALY

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this month, Sharon Daly will retire from Catholic Charities USA. She has been a compassionate, committed advocate for the most vulnerable children and needy families for more than a decade. She has skillfully represented a nationwide faith-based network that serves people in every State, including West Virginia. For many years, Sharon and her grassroots network of service providers have provided information and valuable insights on the needs of children and families. I have gained facts and support on a wide range of issues, from adoption and foster care to childcare and welfare reform, thanks to Sharon Daly and Catholic Charities. She has been a clear, compelling voice for the needs of children and the poor. Her leadership has been inspiring, and her voice will be missed.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY BLOCKING PROPERTY OF CERTAIN PERSONS AND PROHIBITING THE IMPORTATION OF CERTAIN GOODS FROM LIBERIA THAT WAS ESTABLISHED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13348 ON JULY 22, 2004—PM–54

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia are to continue in effect beyond July 22, 2006. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on July 21, 2005 (70 FR 41935).

The actions and policies of former Liberian President Charles Taylor and his close associates, in particular their unlawful depletion of Liberian resources and their removal from Liberia and secreting of Liberian funds and property, continue to undermine Liberia's transition to democracy and the orderly development of its political, administrative, and economic institutions and resources. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons and prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *July 18, 2006*.