

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY NATHAN-PULLIAM

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to recognize and pay tribute to a dear friend, fellow Marylander and 16-year member of the Maryland House of Delegates, Shirley Nathan-Pulliam. Shirley has been a tireless advocate for eliminating health disparities throughout her career as a public servant. The Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene is appropriately honoring her on October 4 by announcing the establishment of the "Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Lecture Series" at this year's annual Maryland Health Disparity Conference.

Shirley has strong convictions and has often stated: "In a country as rich and powerful as the United States of America, no person should be without a basic plan of health care." As a registered nurse and former faculty associate at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Shirley has seen firsthand how minorities are disproportionately harmed by certain diseases and the inequality in care across racial and ethnic lines. Her belief that health care is a basic human right, and not a privilege, has compelled her to serve in public office—a decision that has benefited all Marylanders and has helped improve health equality in our State.

Shirley has had many successes as a legislator, but one of the most important has been her work in establishing the Maryland Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities in 2004. This office is charged with promoting health equity for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other groups experiencing health disparities. Another key legislative accomplishment of Shirley's was her success in providing health care coverage to more than 100,000 children in Maryland.

Shirley is not a woman who idly witnesses society's inequities. Her compassion and empathy drive her to come up with solutions for the problems she sees. As a sponsor or cosponsor of hundreds of bills that have been signed into law, Shirley has been instrumental in improving the lives of Marylanders in countless ways. When Shirley discovered Maryland had the third highest oral cancer rate for African-American men in the Nation, she secured \$500,000 to fight the disease. She also was lead sponsor of legislation providing \$2.6 million annually for breast cancer treatment for low-income women living in Maryland.

Shirley has been an indispensable partner and an inspiration in my efforts to address health disparities at the federal level. We worked together to codify the National Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities, correcting a long-standing bias in our health care system that was ill-equipped to deal with disparities among different populations.

I wish the University of Maryland's Center for Health Equity and the State Office of Minority Health great success in their stewardship of the "Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Lecture Series." There is still a great deal of work to be done in achieving Shirley's dream of erasing health disparities and making health care a right for every human being. But with her leadership and legacy to follow, I am confident her dream will one day become a reality.●

ST. PETER'S CENTENNIAL

• Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on October 16, 1911, the first Italian Catholic congregation in the city of Portland, ME, met under the guidance of Father Agnello Santagnello. Seventy-five families came together, and plans were laid to build a church for the small but growing community of new Americans.

Before year's end, just in time for Christmas mass, an old stable was transformed into a chapel at a cost of just under \$2,800 and much hard work. That modest chapel was named St. Peter's—the rock of the Church on the rocky coast of Maine.

By the mid-1920s, the parish numbered nearly 1,000 families and the thriving Italian-American community needed a larger spiritual home. Father Teresio DiMingo, who took the reins of the congregation in 1927, went house-to-house throughout Portland's Little Italy neighborhood soliciting funds, and found generosity at every door.

The new church was under construction in 1929 when disaster struck—the stock market crash and the ensuing Great Depression. Father DiMingo returned the contributions to those in need. He matched that act of compassion with determination, and continued the construction with his own life savings.

The Church of St. Peter was dedicated that August. That great celebration included the blessing of Father DiMingo's second great gift to his parish—a cross made from fragments of the True Cross.

Since that day, worshipers have noticed a curious inscription above the doorway—the letters "L & L." That was yet another gift from Father DiMingo. Those letters represent the Latin words for "him" and "her." St. Peter's was then, and is today, a church for families.

Today, in this centennial year, the families of St. Peter's continue to build on that solid foundation. Their vibrant church remains a rock of faith.

And it grows as a center of charity and caring. In the early 1950s, an Italian priest came to America seeking aid for children orphaned during the Second World War. The generous response from Portland led to the founding of the Italian Heritage Center, which continues to enrich the city with a culture of great food, music, and festivals.

That a small fellowship of faith was born in a stable and grew into a something mighty and lasting is more than powerful symbolism. It is a testament to the spirit, the resolve, and the energy of Portland's Italian-American community. On the 100th anniversary of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, I offer the members of that parish the traditional Italian wish for a long life of health and happiness—"Cent'anni!"●

MICHIGAN VOLUNTARISM

• Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, our Nation's veterans made enormous sacrifices in defense of our Nation through their military service. One of the many ways we recognize their service is through essential government programs that form the foundation of our Nation's promise to care for veterans. These programs are made stronger by the valuable contributions of volunteers. Volunteers who freely offer their time to improve the quality of life of American veterans provide a personal reminder that a grateful nation will always remember and value their sacrifice. This spirit of generosity and compassion is embodied at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans in west Michigan. A banquet to honor the positive impact these volunteers have had over the past year will take place on September 27, 2011.

In operation since 1886, the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans is a 758-bed home for veterans in need of long-term care. Residents are cared for by a professional staff of doctors, nurses and social workers, all of whom tirelessly work to fulfill the home's mission of providing quality interdisciplinary care and helping residents "achieve their highest potential of independence, self worth, wellness and dignity." Supporting the professional staff in these efforts is a capable and compassionate army of volunteers. In 2010 alone, almost 900 different volunteers served at the home, with approximately 200 volunteers putting in at least 100 hours of service. Some volunteers are veterans themselves; some are family members of current or past residents; others have no personal connection to the home other than the desire to help American heroes.

Volunteers provide a host of services for the veterans and hold events that improve the residents' quality of life. Perhaps the most essential service volunteers provide is something that most people take for granted: visiting with veterans individually, offering human companionship. For veterans in homes, especially the elderly or disabled, having someone read or play cards with them, or simply have a conversation with them can provide great comfort. In addition to providing a simple yet powerful human connection, volunteers ensure that veterans at the home live active lives by helping to run the home's woodshop, bowling alley and library, as well as escorting residents to painting and ceramics classes. Residents also enjoy the animal therapy