

SPECIAL ENVOY APPOINTMENT

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, as chairman of the Near East and South and Central Asia subcommittee on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, today I cosponsored S. 653, a bill that authorizes the President to appoint a Special Envoy within the Department of State to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

Unfortunately, there is a wide range of persecuted minorities who too often are victims of discrimination, marginalization, and violence in the region. Coptic Christians in Egypt, Baha'i in Iran, Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan, and Christians in Syria are examples of communities and faiths that suffer intolerance.

I believe that all peoples deserve equal treatment, regardless of faith, and I hope the appointment of a Special Envoy within the State Department will help protect those universal rights.

HONORING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER COLUMBUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, today I wish to honor the 100th anniversary of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus. The center promotes physical, intellectual, and spiritual wellness for the 6,500 members across Central Ohio.

Joseph Schonthal, an immigrant from Austria, founded the Jewish Community Center in 1913 to assist immigrants from Eastern Europe as they settled into their new life in the United States. The center provided those immigrants with a community center to learn and to grow. Mr. Schonthal also established Camp Schonthal in the center, one of the first Jewish camps in the region.

Today, the Jewish Community Center has several centers located around Columbus that provide adult, youth, and early childhood programs. The center is home to several cultural events a year and hosts a recreation and wellness center.

The Jewish Community Center recently opened the Columbus Jewish Day School to provide children from kindergarten through the fifth grade with a general curriculum, while also helping to foster their Jewish heritage.

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Columbus provides the Jewish community in Central Ohio with educational and cultural programs for members of all ages. I congratulate all who were involved in making its first 100 years a success.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND S. BURTON

• Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, today I wish to honor the remarkable service of a great New Hampshire statesman: Councilor Raymond S. Burton of Bath.

Councilor Burton has devoted his life to serving the people of New Hampshire—and it is been a labor of love. He has served with great distinction, remarkable diligence, Yankee wit and wisdom, and a deep and abiding love for the people of northern New Hampshire.

For 18 terms, he has represented District One on the State's Executive Council, distinguishing himself as a tireless champion for the North Country. Ray is the longest serving Executive Councilor in New Hampshire's history.

He has also served for 22 years as a Grafton County Commissioner, and is now the board's Clerk. His position as a county commissioner allows him to double his efforts to improve the lives of the people of northern New Hampshire, which is his life's work.

This past weekend, Councilor Burton made the very sad announcement that he will not seek reelection to either elected post next year. This was no doubt a difficult decision for Ray, given his decades of service. I look forward to being in Council District One on Friday to join with Ray's many friends and supporters to honor his unmatched record of service to our state.

I am confident that he will continue to give 110 percent to serving his constituents, just as he has done for decades.

But his announcement represents a tremendous loss, not just for the people of the North County, but for citizens across New Hampshire.

Daniel Webster once said, “. . . in the mountains of New Hampshire, God Almighty has hung out a sign to show that there He makes men.” Webster was referring to our beloved Old Man of the Mountain. But he could have just as easily been talking about Councilor Ray Burton, a gold standard public official of unmatched stature.

No one brings the same level of dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm to public life as Ray Burton.

To him, public service is not just a privilege—it is a calling and a true joy. And no one is better at constituent service than Ray Burton.

District One is vast, stretching from Pittsburg on the Canadian border south to the Lakes Region, and from the Connecticut River Valley to the Mount Washington Valley.

He has logged countless miles traveling the villages, towns, cities and counties of his district, frequently behind the wheel of a classic car. And if he is not driving an antique car, you will frequently find him on a snowmobile.

Seventeen hour days are not unusual for Councilor Burton. He has been known to start days in Claremont and finish way up in northern Coos County, before returning to his cherished home in Bath.

No community gathering or meeting is too small for Councilor Burton. If it is important to his constituents, it is important to him.

He has said for many years that he always runs for office like he is three votes behind—a real statement, given that he has served on the Executive

Council for nearly 4 decades, frequently was the nominee of both the Republicans and the Democrats, and comfortably wins reelection by double digit margins. It just goes to show you how seriously he takes the job and how eager he is to make a difference in the lives of his constituents.

The fruits of his labor can be found across Council District One, whether it is an improved bridge or road, or an initiative to strengthen the economy and create jobs.

It can also be found in quieter ways: the constituent he helped with a state agency, or the citizen who needed a hand with local or county government

In addition to handing out his trademark combs, Ray gladly gives out his office number, his home office number, his car phone number and his email address—and he encourages people to use them. They call for help in times of need—and he delivers results.

In fact, a former State commissioner once joked that when she switched on her computer on Monday mornings, she would find two dozen emails from Councilor Burton. That would not surprise me, given his view that the concerns of his constituents are of paramount importance and should go straight to the top. I can personally report having received dozens of inquiries from Ray—signed with his familiar line, “May I hear from you?”

When not traveling his district, Ray is an enormously respected leader in Concord, where he first arrived in the late 1960s to work as a Sergeant at Arms in the State House of Representatives and the State Senate. Remarkably, he has served at the Statehouse during the administrations of 10 governors.

In 1976, he was first elected to New Hampshire's Executive Council, an executive branch panel that functions as a check on executive power and dates back to 1680. It is a position he has held since 1981, earning the honorary title of “dean” of the council.

When I served as New Hampshire's Attorney General, I saw up close that Councilor Burton is someone who does his homework, asks tough questions, and fights with every fiber of his being for what he believes is right. I also saw how deeply he loves our State—and how hard he fights for the people of northern New Hampshire.

Beyond his tremendous efforts on behalf of his constituents, Ray also deserves great credit for working to prepare future generations of leaders. After his election to the Executive Council, he initiated a student internship program, which has become legendary in New Hampshire. Over the years, 140 interns have served Councilor Burton. Many of these young men and women have gone on to great careers in politics and government, carrying on his proud tradition of excellence in public service. I know that Ray's interns are a source of tremendous pride to him, and I commend him

for continuing a program that has served so many so well.

I am pleased to join citizens across New Hampshire in thanking Councilor Burton for his decades of extraordinary service to our State. No one has fought harder for his constituents than Ray Burton. And for generations to come, public officials will look to Ray as a model—striving to match his tremendous energy, his inherent decency, and his extraordinary commitment to strengthening our beloved state.●

REMEMBERING BERNARD WYNDER

● Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to an extraordinary individual, Bernard “Bernie” Wynder, who passed away at the much too young age of 58 this past June while serving as the president of the Allegany County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP. Bernie overcame the challenges of a childhood on the streets of East Baltimore and made it his life’s work to mentor young Black men and help them to succeed as students, professionals, husbands, and fathers. Bernie generously gave his time and inimitable leadership to numerous community organizations, including Maryland Salem Children’s Trust, Western Maryland Food Bank, Potomac Council Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Allegany County Multicultural Committee, American Red Cross, and the City of Cumberland Mediation Advisory Council. He also served on the Allegany County Human Relations Commission and as chair of the Friends of the NAACP.

Most recently, Bernie’s loving attention help reignite the local NAACP branch as a powerful voice for social justice in Mountain Maryland. I was privileged to spend time with Bernie on my visits to Allegany County and get to know his love for his community and to be inspired by his passion for social justice.

Bernie was born in Baltimore on January 4, 1955. He graduated in 1974 from Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School, where he served as president of the Student Senate for the Baltimore City School System. He is a 1978 graduate of Frostburg State University and received his master of education from FSU in 1984. Bernie started his professional career in January 1979, accepting the position of admissions counselor & minority recruiter at FSU. He became coordinator of minority recruitment at Slippery Rock University and then returned to FSU in 1982 as associate director of admissions. He served in this role until 1986, when he was promoted to be the director of the Office of Student Human Relations & Minority Affairs. In this capacity, he developed an academic monitoring program which is still in use today. In 1996, Bernie took over the management duties of both the Admissions and Financial Aid Offices at FSU. In 2001, he

moved to the Athletic Department, where he served as the assistant director of athletics and worked with coaches and the Office of Enrollment Services to develop recruitment activities for athletes and to increase their retention and graduation rates. Later, Bernie served as assistant vice president of student services.

Bernie Wynder’s lifetime of service has been recognized and appreciated by others. In 1986, Bernie received the Trio Achiever’s Award for the State of Maryland. He was inducted into Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School’s Hall of Fame in 1993. He received FSU’s Alumni Achievement Award in 1997 and received the College Admissions Representative of the Year Award given by the College Bound Foundation for service to Baltimore City high school students in 2002. In 2005, Bernie received the NAACP Image Award. In 2010, Bernie was one of three Marylanders honored as a “Living Legend” by the Associated Black Charities for his “profound achievement in higher education.” He is also an alumnus of Leadership Allegany.

Mr. President, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “Everybody can be great . . . because anybody can serve . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” Dr. King could have been describing Bernie Wynder, who devoted his life to service to others. The NAACP and FSU students, faculty, staff, and alumni mourn his death, as do his brothers in Omega Psi Phi to whom he was a mentor and a source of inspiration. His love and concern transformed the lives of so many generations of Frostburg students.

I send my deepest condolences to his wife of 32 years, Robin Vowels Wynder; their son, Bernard “Bear” Wynder Jr.; their daughter, Brandie McIntyre; and the rest of his family. Bernie Wynder was a man of uncommon integrity, wisdom, compassion, and commitment. We will miss his courage and vision and voice.●

REMEMBERING PAUL RALSTIN

● Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of an outstanding conservationist, sportsman, and dear friend.

Paul Ralstin’s interest in the outdoors and wildlife conservation began at a young age, when he was an active Boy Scout and Eagle Scout. He grew that appreciation into a strong devotion to advancing conservation efforts as an active Ducks Unlimited volunteer, hunter, and fisherman. A graduate of Capital High School, Paul grew up and lived in Boise. In addition to serving in multiple leadership roles in Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Ducks Unlimited de Mexico, Paul was successful in the construction industry as owner of the family construction business, Gem State Builders. Paul also helped develop opportunities for others through serving as a mentor.

Throughout his life, Paul led with a heartfelt exuberance. His wit, friendliness, sense of adventure, and fun-loving spirit will be forever remembered. I have greatly valued his friendship and insight and extend my deep condolences to his wife Jeanne, children, and many friends and family. Paul’s exemplary commitment to improving our natural resources and wildlife habitat will not be forgotten. His enthusiasm and dedication will live on in the many lives he touched throughout his life.●

BUCKSKIN MINE

● Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I rise today with great pride to speak about another Wyoming success story. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the Buckskin Mine, which is located in my home State of Wyoming, for the outstanding record of safety they were able to compile in 2012. The mine’s focus on safety and the great results they were able to achieve speak volumes about the mine and the care and attention they give to safety and to keeping their employees safe at work.

I have often heard it said that successful safety and health programs don’t just “happen.” They take a great deal of time and effort and they result from a teamwork approach that involves everyone from the owner of the mine to the dedicated and hard-working team that works in the mine every day. That means this safety award was earned by everyone at the mine.

It is no secret. Working in a mine is a difficult and dangerous job, and it requires every worker to look out for their own safety as well as their fellow workers’ safety. That kind of diligence, exercised every day, is what helps to ensure that all our workers will make a safe return home at the end of the day to be with their families.

Simply put, that is why the Buckskin Mine is receiving this recognition. Their staff goes the extra mile every day to make sure their mine is as safe as it can possibly be. The culture of workplace safety that is then created helps to keep each of their workers focused on safety throughout the day. The result is this special award.

I have always believed that the best way to lead is by example, and by earning this important recognition they have established a record of safety that other mines will want to emulate. In the end, that is something that will continue to benefit Wyoming and the mining industry all across the Nation.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, on which I serve, has focused our attention on this key issue for many years. As a committee, we are well aware of what an impressive record this is, and we hope their record of success will become the norm across the United States. Safe work habits create safe workplaces and low accident rates for all employees which makes our business community, especially our mining