

CMSAF Samuel L. Johnson on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Air Force.

Chief Johnson has given much to this Nation through his dedicated and selfless service. His Air Force career started in the great State of Georgia on December 21, 1984, following his graduation from Echols County High School near Statenville. When Chief Johnson began his career, he got exactly what he asked for—the ability to see the world. His first assignment took him to the United Kingdom, where he laid the foundation for a tremendous career as a security policeman. His career would take him to the ICBM fields of Wyoming, followed by his first tour in the Republic of Korea. Chief Johnson would end up in the United Kingdom once again, then to the Emerald Coast of Florida, followed by his first tour in Texas. He would spend a couple of years in our Nation's Capital before heading back to Korea. He would then return to the States, landing himself his first tour in south Georgia. Long from ending his travels, Chief Johnson would take one more assignment to Texas, followed by a year in Qatar. Finally, Chief Johnson landed back in south Georgia for his second assignment there, which would be his last assignment in the Air Force. During his career, along with all of the aforementioned permanent duty station changes, Chief Johnson deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. Chief Johnson sewed on his final stripe, earning him a spot in the top 1 percent of all enlisted members of the military allowed by law, on September 1, 2009.

Chief Johnson is the recipient of the following major medals and decorations for his service and accomplishments: two Bronze Star Medals, five Meritorious Service Medals, four Air Force Commendation Medals, four Air Force Achievement Medals, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Air Force Combat Readiness Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, and the NATO Medal.

Throughout his distinguished career he has represented our country and the Air Force with dignity and honor. On behalf of the Senate and the United States of America, I thank CMSAF Samuel L. Johnson for his service and sacrifices over the past 30 years. I wish him Godspeed and continued happiness as he starts a new chapter in his life.●

#### LIHEAP ACTION DAY

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, today is National LIHEAP Action Day. Advocates from many different States are here to make the case for the Low In-

come Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP. This important initiative helps low-income Rhode Island families and millions of vulnerable Americans across the country pay their energy bills. Simply put, access to affordable home energy is a matter of health and safety for many low-income households, children, and seniors.

In Rhode Island this year, LIHEAP provided roughly \$24 million, which allowed the State to deliver assistance to 27,700 households. However, despite bipartisan efforts that I have led with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, to press for robust support for the program, funding reductions in 2011 and 2012, along with sequester cuts, have led to a decrease in the number of households served. As a result, nearly 1.5 million vulnerable households have lost access to this vital lifeline.

With one of the harshest winters in decades and the high cost of energy experienced in some regions of the country, including high natural gas and heating oil prices in New England, the importance of the LIHEAP program is even more pronounced. According to the Energy Information Administration, the average cost of home heating this winter will rise to nearly \$1,000 on average, a 6 percent increase over last year. These cost increases are happening at a time when households are receiving lower benefits. The average LIHEAP payments have been reduced by more than \$100 since 2010, dropping from \$520 in fiscal year 2010 to \$406 in fiscal year 2013.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the need to provide access to affordable home energy for the most vulnerable households in our States and join me in support of LIHEAP. This assistance is an indispensable lifeline, helping to ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and affording other basic necessities such as food and medicine.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2824. An act to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to stop the ongoing waste by the Department of the Interior of taxpayer resources and implement the final rule on excess spoil, mining waste, and buffers for perennial and intermittent streams, and for other purposes.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:06 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 4275. An act to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue

Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2157. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4983. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; Amendment 5" (RIN 0648-AY47) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4984. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area; Amendment 102" (RIN 0648-BD03) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4985. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska; Amendment 95 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish" (RIN 0648-BC39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 12, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4986. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XD125) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-4987. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction" (RIN0648-XD134) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the