

Senate. I know I am not alone in saying that we will miss having her here. I also know I am not alone in saying that I am sure her work is not done. I wish her luck in this next chapter of her life and look forward to seeing the tremendous work she will accomplish outside of this Chamber.

MARK PRYOR

Madam President, I also wish to honor my colleague, Senator MARK PRYOR, who will be leaving the Senate at the end of this Congress. Senator PRYOR has been a tireless champion for the people of Arkansas for 12 years in this legislative body. However, his commitment and dedication to the State of Arkansas is reflected not only in his work here, but in the public service he and his family have given for decades.

As the son of the former Governor and U.S. Senator, Senator MARK PRYOR grew up in a family which embodied public service, instilling his interest and desire to do the same in his career. After attending the University of Arkansas and working in the private sector as an attorney, he turned his sights to public service. While serving as a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives and then as attorney general for the State of Arkansas, Senator PRYOR honed his understanding of the needs of the State and developed strong connections through its institutions which served him well throughout his career. It was here that I first met Mark. He was serving as attorney general in Arkansas at the same time I was serving as attorney general in North Dakota. I was immediately impressed with this young public servant and grew to understand that he is intelligent and principled in how he approaches his life and career. In 2003, Senator PRYOR was elected U.S. Senator from Arkansas, reclaiming the seat his father once held.

As a Senator, he served on various committees which allowed him to fight for the priorities of Arkansas, pass legislation and champion initiatives which helped this Nation. During his tenure on the Armed Services Committee, Senator PRYOR protected the interests of Arkansas servicemembers and their families. His work on the Appropriations and Commerce Committees created opportunities for growth in transportation, rural broadband, energy, and agriculture, all critical interests for Arkansas. Leading these issues with bipartisan proposals and working closely with his colleagues on marshaling these efforts Congress after Congress, Senator PRYOR earned the respect of his colleagues for his quiet devotion and steadfast commitment.

MARK is a Senator who promotes common sense solutions—solutions that seek strong support and address some of the more important needs of this Nation's citizenry. During my short time in the Senate, we served together on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Small Business Committees. I very much enjoyed

working with him and serving together for the benefit of others. I continue to find him to be a man of great honesty and integrity. This type of stewardship is to be admired and appreciated by those inspired to serve on the local, State or Federal level.

I applaud my colleague for his years of tireless commitment in defense of his home State, for his service in the Senate and this Country. I wish the very best to him and his family in the years to come.

MARK BEGICH

Madam President, finally I pay tribute and recognize the accomplishments of a trusted ally and dear friend, Senator MARK BEGICH, who will be leaving the Senate at the end of the term. Mark has been a tenacious and steadfast advocate for his constituents and the State of Alaska and a strong moderate voice during his years in the Senate.

I have had the honor and privilege to work with Senator BEGICH on both the Indian Affairs and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committees. As someone who represents one of the most rural States in America, he has an impressive understanding and compassion for the unique challenges rural communities face.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, he played a major role in postal reform negotiations. He understood rural citizens rely most on the Postal Service for critical deliveries of prescription medicines, time sensitive bills, and other important communications. He knew that without a rural post office, many small, rural communities would cease to exist.

During his tenure on the Indian Affairs Committee, he was dedicated to confronting and addressing the unpleasant truths about the Federal Government's treatment of Native people in our country. He understood the threats facing subsistence rights, native languages, and rich cultural traditions, and fought to ensure they were given parity and respect. Senator BEGICH also knew far too many Native women today experience violence and sexual assault, particularly in remote areas, and so he fought for the tribal provisions in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Woman Act—VAWA—and advanced his Safe Families and Villages Act to extend those protections to Native women in Alaska. He has also been a fighter for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans and worked hard to increase their access to care at both Indian Health Service and Veteran Affairs facilities. His compassion for indigenous issues extended to tribes in the lower 48 States and Native Hawaiians, and I know Native people across the country feel they have lost a true champion with his departure.

Anyone who knows Senator BEGICH knows he is an intellectually curious and energetic person. He always approached issues from a solutions-ori-

ented mindset, which meant he was more tied to outcomes than to rhetoric, and the Senate was well-served by his presence. Senator BEGICH is also a devoted family man to his wife Deborah and young son Jacob. I remind myself that our loss is their gain, as I am sure they are excited to have him home more. I truly enjoyed working alongside him and look forward to when our paths cross again. I wish him incredible happiness and success in the next chapter.

TRIBUTE TO NANCY ERICKSON

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, today I recognize Nancy Erickson for her 26 years of honorable service to the United States Senate.

Nancy is a native of Brandon, SD, and is a graduate of Augustana College and American University, where she earned her M.A. in public policy. Nancy began working for the Senate in 1989, when she accepted a position working for Senator Daschle. In 2005, Nancy began serving as the Democratic representative for the Senate's Sergeant at Arms. Then in 2007, Nancy became the 32nd person and the 6th woman to serve as Secretary of the Senate. Nancy has been a constant professional in the way she conducts herself and goes about her work.

Nancy has played a pivotal role in the function of the Senate, and I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to her and wish her continued success in the years to come.

REMEMBERING JOHN KREBS

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life and extraordinary accomplishments of former Congressman John Krebs, who recently passed away at the age of 87 in Fresno, CA.

John was born on December 17, 1926, in Berlin, Germany. After Hitler came to power, he escaped with his family to Tel Aviv. There, he became a diamond cutter and joined the Haganah, a Jewish underground organization that supported independence from Britain and the establishment of an independent Jewish state.

John moved to California in 1946 to attend the University of California at Berkeley and after graduating in 1950, he became a United States citizen in 1952. Following two years in the U.S. Army, John graduated from the University of California Hastings College of Law and practiced law for three decades.

Throughout his remarkable life, John Krebs sustained a strong commitment to public service. He worked on numerous state and local campaigns and was a respected Democratic activist and community leader before his 1970 election to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, where he was a courageous and eloquent advocate for his constituents.

In 1974, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he

successfully championed a bill to permanently protect 25,000 acres of the Sierra National Forest known as Kaiser Ridge, saving this beautiful area above Huntington Lake from logging. Then, in 1978, Congressman Krebs took on an even greater challenge: fighting for legislation to transfer Mineral King Valley from the Sequoia National Forest to Sequoia National Park, thereby blocking plans to build a ski resort that would have destroyed this pristine alpine valley in the southern Sierra Nevada. Facing significant opposition, this was the toughest fight of his political career—one that may have cost him his seat in Congress—but John was proud of what he accomplished in preserving this natural treasure for future generations to enjoy.

Years later, I was honored to introduce legislation designating 40,000 acres of land, including the Mineral King Valley, as the John Krebs Wilderness. President Obama signed it into law in 2009, and that summer some 200 friends, family and admirers gathered in Mineral King Valley to dedicate this worthy tribute to John's courage and vision.

On Friday, November 14, more than 250 of John's friends and family joined together at Temple Beth Israel in Fresno to share memories and honor this remarkable man's amazing legacy. John Krebs's extraordinary life was a uniquely American story, and he will be truly missed. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife and partner of 58 years, Hanna, children Daniel and Karen, and their families.

VOICE OF AMERICA UKRAINIAN SERVICE'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, today I honor Voice of America's Ukrainian Service as it celebrates its 65th anniversary this week. VOA has distinguished itself among the very best news organizations in the world. For over 65 years, from the dark days of Stalin's rule to the regime of Vladimir Putin, VOA has served as a beacon of truth for Ukrainian citizens. Throughout the Cold War, VOA supported the struggle for freedom and gave hope to citizens living under repressive rule in Soviet Ukraine. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, VOA was the first to pick up the call of independence and take advantage of new opportunities to speak freely to the Ukrainian people.

The organization's long history of comprehensive reporting and objective, reliable coverage proved ever more important in November 2013 when demonstrations broke out against then-President Yanukovich's decision not to sign an association agreement with Europe. Through all of this, VOA provided live video streaming and multimedia reporting from the center of the EuroMaidan demonstrations and was one of the few news outlets fully covering Russia's annexation of Crimea. In its coverage, the world saw the spirit of

the Ukrainian people and stood with them in their struggle for democracy, human rights, and the values of the transatlantic community. Through its continued coverage today, the world is now witness to Russia's aggression and invasion.

More recently, VOA has been a critical source of information for the Ukrainian people as Russia continues to advance its propaganda campaign across the region, spreading disinformation and undermining the efforts of Ukraine's EuroMaidan reformers. Putin's control of information is a key part of his strategy to rebuild post-Soviet Russia through aggression, and he uses disinformation as a tool to complement his transnational military campaigns and subvert democratic growth and development in Ukraine and across Eastern Europe. At a time when Putin's propaganda machine is working to deny reality and distort perceptions, Ukrainians rely heavily on VOA's credibility and accuracy, and its message of freedom, hope and human dignity.

VOA's reporters have worked under difficult and at times dangerous conditions. Previous governments have attempted to manipulate the media through repression and intimidation, and journalists were often arrested or detained. Today, journalists attempting to report on the conflict in eastern Ukraine are being harassed, intimidated, and physically attacked, constantly under threat of Russian thuggery. But this has not stopped the brave men and women working for VOA Ukrainian Service. They have worked through trying times, but have always maintained the integrity and professionalism to which all journalists can aspire.

Over the last 65 years, VOA has delivered thoughtful, comprehensive, and honest reporting when the Ukrainian people needed it most. I thank all members of VOA Ukrainian Service, past and present, for their tireless efforts and congratulate the organization on its 65th anniversary. Thank you for the work you do in service to the people of Ukraine and the shared values we hold dear. Together, and with the information you provide, we can achieve the democratic aspirations of our people and make the world a better, safer place for all citizens.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT F. HEIL, JR.

• Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I salute an unsung hero in our government, Mr. Robert F. Heil, Jr. Bob, as he is known to his friends, is retiring as the budget director at the Health Resources Services Administration after 42 years of service to the Federal Government.

To be honest, I don't know Bob Heil but I have heard about him and his work for years. Bob isn't the guy who stands up and gives speeches, he's the guy that quietly makes things happen. Whenever there was a problem with

one of the community health centers in my State, my staff would say "I'll call Bob" and I knew it would get straightened out. Bob would always call to let us know when something good might happen, and if something bad was coming, he would call with a solution before we knew there was a problem. He's a man you can trust.

In a town where political winds blow, Bob has won universal praise from both sides of the aisle for years. That's because he always answers the phone, if he knows the answer he gives it, and he treats everyone with the same respect—no matter who is in the White House or who is in control of Congress.

As Bob moves into another phase of his life, I thank him for his years of work expanding access to health care for the least fortunate among us. Hubert Humphrey once said, "the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

By that measure, Bob has made our society and our government a much better one. Thank you Bob, on behalf of myself, my staff, and all those who will never know who to thank. I wish you all the best.●

REMEMBERING BOB BENNETT

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I wish to talk about a friend, a mentor, a public servant, a husband, father, and son of Ohio, Bob Bennett, who passed away at his home in Cleveland last Saturday. I was sorry to miss the funeral service in Ohio today for Bob because we are still in session, but I did want to pay tribute to him in a lasting way through the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Bob was a lawyer and a CPA, a man who loved sailing and giving back to the people of Ohio through his many charitable works such as his time serving on the Board of University Hospitals in Cleveland. He was a legend in Ohio and a giant of Ohio politics. He became chairman of the Ohio Republican Party in 1988 and remained actively involved in politics until his death last week. He was one of the longest serving State chairs of either party, was viewed as a true professional, and gained the respect of political leaders in both parties.

He was certainly successful in the world of politics. When he was first elected chairman, there were no statewide Republican office holders in Ohio. He went to work with the passion, the dedication, the commitment that would become his trademark. He was a happy warrior, beloved by those in his party and respected by his political rivals. He had a vision not only for what the Republican Party could become but for what it could accomplish for the people of Ohio.

Within a decade, under his leadership, Republicans controlled all three