

been a part of this. I actually was here at a pretty dramatic floor debate on this issue in 2005, in which some people wanted to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling, even to the degree that they put that as a rider on the Defense bill. We were able to stop that. I think that was the will of Congress, that they did not want to see drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

But we have had this discussion since 1960, when Dwight Eisenhower set aside originally 9 million acres, and in 1980, thanks to the work of Scoop Jackson, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which expanded the refuge to 19 million acres.

I have visited the refuge. I do believe it is a critical habitat for wildlife and the Gwich'in people who called this the sacred place where life begins. It is truly special. I do think we have had many discussions about this. This action probably will not be the last of them, but I do applaud the President for taking the Arctic refuge, which is habitat for 45 different species of land animals, 36 different species of fish, 180 species of birds—and has the greatest variety of plant and animal life of any park or refuge in the polar Arctic. I do believe it is an ecosystem and an ecosystem that is unlike anything else we have in the United States.

So I am proud the President has taken what has been a refuge that was lacking a plan and has now put a wilderness plan in place or the elements of what it will take to preserve those various species and animals and that very special place.

I know my colleague feels very strongly about the President's announcement. I think a refuge plan that is based on science and public comment—we have had a plan, but this is the first plan to say we are going to protect this area. It recommends 12 million acres of refuge, including the coastal plain as wilderness. It is one of the most pristine and unique public places.

I am confident America can meet our energy needs without opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I am convinced we can come up with an energy strategy that is much more compelling for the future of the United States, one in which we can lead and one in which we can help other countries, whether it is what the President did with China in getting an agreement or working with India or all the things we are doing to try to be a leader in what is energy efficiency and ways to impact the marketplace so consumers can look for cleaner, more efficient uses of fuel.

So this is going to be a continuing debate in this Congress between a 19th century view of energy policy and a 21st century view of energy policy. I would ask my colleagues to think about these countries the President has just recently visited. He went to China. No one thinks China's air standard is what we should have in the

United States. India has had its own challenges. They have hundreds of millions of people who are without electricity needs.

So the question is whether these sources of energy are going to be that solution, whether a dirty source of fossil fuel is going to be the solution or whether we can work together on cleaner energy solutions. I think we can do that.

In fact, I am excited the United States can be a leader in these technologies, which will result in more job growth, just as those previous energy bills did when we worked together for higher fuel efficiency standards, for more energy efficiency, to come up with more sources of diversified fuel. I am very confident we are going to, in the next few years, usher in a new era of aviation.

We have already proven we can fly airplanes with a 50-50 drop in jet fuel. We now have to prove we can manufacture those large sources and get planes flying on that. What a great accomplishment that will be in reducing carbon emissions and giving the flying public and those airlines something that is much more affordable than what we have been dealing with for the last 10 or 15 years.

I look forward to my colleague and I working tomorrow—some tonight and a little bit starting early tomorrow—on how we move forward with this legislation. I know my colleague and I see a path forward. Similar to any two people who are trying to manage a bill on the floor, we also know we have all of our colleagues to work with because nothing in the Senate operates unless it operates through our process and working collaboratively or, I should say, it can work, it is just going to take a very long time.

So we pledge to work in the next few days to try to get an amendment process that will not be prematurely cut off after 1 hour of a pending bill but will come to terms, and hopefully our colleagues will work with us to limit the number of those amendments and we can move forward to legislation that we think will help our economy grow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I know our colleague from Delaware is wishing to speak. If I may just proceed to do the closeout and he would be able to speak after that.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CENTRAL ILLINOIS XPRESS BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the remarkable strength and

spirit of the Central Illinois Xpress basketball team and its coach Tariq Toran.

As the only team of girls in an all-boys fifth grade basketball league in Springfield, IL, the Central Illinois Xpress has defied the odds and emerged as a powerhouse in the Illinois AAU boys' league. With an impressive record of 8 wins and 2 losses in the first half of the season, Coach Toran and the Central Illinois Xpress girls have made a name for themselves not just back at home, but across the Nation.

Strong, confident, and determined, the team comprised of nine girls ages 10 and 11 years old do not shy away from hard work and tough competition on the basketball court. With a series of two-on-one drills coupled with push-ups and sprints, these girls know how to practice hard and play hard. The Xpress girls use their summers to compete in a higher division comprised of older girls, which helps prepare them to play against tough teams during the season.

This tireless preparation and fearless attitude brought Coach Toran to sign the girls up for the all-boys' league this year. So far, the team's success has been undeniable. With their dribble drives, crisp passes, and methodical game play, the Central Illinois Xpress players have racked up more than enough wins to show the boys, and the community, that they are a force to be reckoned with this season.

These girls know what it means to push themselves for excellence, to fight for something against the odds, and to prove themselves to those, including some of the boys they are playing, who don't expect a girls team to be strong and play smart, aggressive ball.

It is my pleasure to wish these fifth-grade girls in Springfield the best of luck in the second half of this season.

RECOGNIZING THE VERMONT STATE POLICE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, during the closing days of the 112th Congress, and for the duration of the 113th Congress, I had the privilege of serving the Senate as the President pro tempore. It of course was a great honor, and a humbling one, to serve the Senate and to represent Vermont in this position. With this designation, because of the matter of presidential succession procedures, I was assigned a security detail. I have spoken before about the outstanding work of the U.S. Capitol Police, and about how much Marcelle and I appreciate the sacrifices they made in the course of their service.

Today I want to thank the Vermont State Police for their outstanding service and steadfast support during my time as President pro tempore. With their extensive and comprehensive knowledge of Vermont's unique landscape and communities, the Vermont State Police coordinated with the U.S. Capitol Police and provided essential guidance, information and support. I

thank them for their professionalism and dedication.

I would like to thank in particular Lieutenant Garry Scott who commands the Traffic Safety Unit of the Vermont State Police Department; Corporal Owen Ballinger, who was an integral part of the everyday operations; Sergeant Teresa Randall; Sergeant Mark Perkins; Sergeant Trevor Carbo; Trooper Jerry Partin; and Trooper Dustin Robinson. These law enforcement officers were able to blend the requirement of a full security detail in unobtrusive ways that enabled us to go about our daily lives and to perform our responsibilities. These dedicated and courteous officers went above and beyond the call of duty, and for that Marcelle and I are infinitely grateful.

I also thank Colonel Thomas L'Esperance and Lieutenant Colonel Matt Birmingham for their constant support.

SELECTION OF HAROLD "HAL" COLSTON AS THE 2014 BURLINGTON FREE PRESS VERMONTNER OF THE YEAR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is a delight to call the Senate's attention to an outstanding Vermonter who was recently recognized for his work to help Vermonters who have struggled with social and economic injustice.

Since 1997, the Burlington Free Press has invited readers to nominate a Vermont resident to be recognized as Vermonter of the Year. Those nominated are among the best doers and visionaries the Green Mountain State has to offer, and each nominee has made a difference in his or her community. Previous winners have included philanthropists, college presidents, a former Governor and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. On the eve of the New Year, the Burlington Free Press named Hal Colston the 2014 Vermonter of the Year.

Hal is a resident of Winooski and certainly deserves this honor. Since relocating to Vermont 25 years ago, Hal's dedication to social, economic, and racial justice has served his community well. He has maintained a steadfast voice for those unable to be heard on their own.

Hal is well known for his entrepreneurial spirit, and he has successfully created and led numerous nonprofit initiatives. In announcing Hal's selection, the Free Press aptly calls him a "serial do-gooder." He received national recognition after founding Good News Garage, which enables individuals and families to move away from poverty by providing reliable transportation. Similarly, he recognized that those in poverty are often without the support networks necessary to move beyond such vulnerable circumstances. As a result, he established NeighborKeepers, an organization that focuses on building supportive community networks that direct families toward the resources they need to suc-

ceed. Today he leads the Partnership for Change, a diverse group of community stakeholders seeking to remodel the Burlington and Winooski School Districts by establishing a student-centered learning system.

As communities work to overcome the challenges of poverty and individuals pursue more prosperous lives for themselves and their families, it is the passionate dedication to serve by leaders such as Hal Colston that makes the greatest difference.

In recognition of Hal Colston's service, I ask unanimous consent that Aki Soga's article from the December 31, 2014, edition of the Burlington Free Press be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Dec. 31, 2014]

VERMONTNER OF THE YEAR: HAL COLSTON

You might call Hal Colston a serial do-gooder.

The Winooski resident has laid down a track record of work to improve the lives of people in the community during his 25-year tenure in Vermont.

Colston is best known as the founder of Good News Garage, the nonprofit that fixes donated vehicles for low-income people.

He also is known for launching NeighborKeepers, an initiative to help families in need build relationships with those who can provide the support they need.

He was instrumental in forcing Vermont to confront the issue of racial profiling by the police.

Colston says he sees every day as an opportunity to make a difference.

"We get them one at a time with no guarantee for tomorrow," he said. "May all of us spend our days wisely to improve the common good."

Colston's understated demeanor often belies his passion. He works to give voice to those who are unable to be heard on their own. He has shown the courage to tackle difficult issues.

Colston's quiet devotion to bringing the people together and looking out for those who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances especially stand out in a year that saw the streets of this country fill with protest—both peaceful and violent—against injustice.

For his years of service to the community in the name of social and economic justice, the Burlington Free Press editorial board names Hal Colston 2014 Vermonter of the Year.

In nominating Colston for Vermonter of the Year, Laban Hill of Winooski writes, "Hal has spent his life devoted to our community and making a difference in both small and large ways."

Colston's work with Good News Garage has earned him national recognition, including an appearance on the Oprah show. The idea is simple. For many, one of the bigger barriers to economic independence is the lack of reliable transportation. Good News Garage tackles that problem in the most direct way possible by awarding reliable cars to those in need.

Colston founded the organization in 1996 after meeting a Lutheran minister he had heard in Philadelphia shortly before moving to Vermont. That chance encounter led to developing an idea and seed funding from what he calls a pan-Lutheran organization. He launched the nonprofit under the wing of the Lutheran Social Services New England.

Nearly two decades later, Good News Garage has awarded more than 4,000 vehicles.

SECOND CAREER

His career in community service also includes a stint as associate director of Community Action in Burlington, now Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, as executive director of the Vermont Commission on National and Community Service and as diversity coordinator for the social services nonprofit HowardCenter.

Colston also spoke out clearly and firmly when African-Americans in the community charged that local police were using racial profiling in stops.

In an April 2007 My Turn piece in the Free Press, Colston wrote, "I believe that racial profiling in Vermont is an epidemic," going on to recount his own experience with "driving while black."

Colston did more than complain. He worked to open a dialogue within the community, including the police, that allowed people to talk openly about issues surrounding race.

"We're building trust," he said. "I don't believe we will ever eradicate racism, but how do we heal from the wounds?"

All this was a major shift for a man who had made a career as a chef and restaurateur in Philadelphia, and arrived in Vermont in 1989 to become the director of catering at the New England Culinary Institute in Essex.

Colston called his career change a midlife crisis, but said the work put him in touch with his core values, "truth and justice."

Today, Colston is engaged in what is perhaps his biggest challenge to date. He serves as director of Partnership for Change, a collaboration between the Burlington and Winooski school districts. The mission is to re-imagine public education to better prepare students from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds to succeed in school, in their careers and as members of their communities.

"The reason I love Vermont is it's got its challenges. But it's really on a human scale. You can have a conversation," he said.

For his steady faith in the ability of each person to make a difference, and putting that faith to work in the service of his community, Hal Colston is the 2014 Vermonter of the Year.

A NOMINATING LETTER

I would like to nominate Hal Colston for Vermonter of the Year.

Hal is director of Partnership for Change, which is remodeling Burlington and Winooski school districts by establishing a student-centered learning system that enables all learners to develop skills, knowledge, and relationships necessary to become confident, motivated, and self-sufficient learners who are successful in college and careers and are engaged in their communities.

Hal and his team are changing the way education is delivered in our communities so that it is more rigorous and more equitable.

Over the years Hal has been an integral and essential part of our community. He founded Good News Garage, which is one of the first nonprofit social enterprise car donation programs in the U.S. He also founded NeighborKeepers, which was a community nonprofit that helped the generational poor become financially secure.

Hal has spent his life devoted to our community and making a difference in both small and large ways. He seems like the ideal candidate for the Burlington Free Press's Vermonter of the Year. In addition, there has never been a person of color who has been recognized as Vermonter of the Year. It's about time.