RECOGNIZING AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA AND THEIR 25TH ANNUAL AIDS WALK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I recognize Aid for AIDS of Nevada and the 25th Annual AIDS Walk in Las Vegas, NV.

Established in 1984, Aid for AIDS of Nevada, AFAN, is the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the State. Each year, AFAN serves more than 3,500 individuals and families in southern Nevada who are living with HIV/AIDS. This organization provides a range of services to help people living with HIV/AIDS manage their disease, including medical case management, housing assistance, and nutritional services. AFAN is also committed to reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and works with community stakeholders to implement prevention initiatives, including educational seminars for high-risk groups.

This year marks the 25th year that AFAN will host AIDS Walk Las Vegas, which is not only AFAN's biggest fundraiser, but also one of the largest events for HIV/AIDS in the State of Nevada. Last year, more than 10,000 people participated in AIDS Walk Las Vegas and raised nearly $440,000 for AFAN. The money raised each year from this event helps AFAN provide health care referrals, food vouchers, bus passes, rent assistance, and other essential services to thousands of Nevadans affected by HIV/AIDS.

I commend AFAN on their 25th Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas, and I applaud their decades of dedicated service to southern Nevada.

RECOGNIZING CARLA SLOAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and honor the career of Carla Sloan as she retires from her position as the American Association of Retired Persons, AARP, Nevada State director.

For more than 30 years, Carla Sloan has been a leading advocate for Nevadans. She has held positions ranging from the founding director of the Howard W. Cannon Senior Services Center in Las Vegas, senior services coordinator for the Las Vegas Housing Authority, administrator for the State of Nevada's Division for Aging Services, and founding Nevada State director for the AARP.

Through these positions, Ms. Sloan led a statewide coalition of senior organizations and developed initiatives to help seniors throughout the Silver State live more independently. She also worked to ensure Nevada's publicly funded programs address the needs of older individuals and connected thousands of Nevada's seniors to essential resources, including health care, housing, and financial planning services.

In addition to these roles, Ms. Sloan has effectively represented the interests of Nevada's seniors by providing an expert perspective on several community and State boards, including the Governor's Commission on Aging; the Nevada Legislative Task Force for a Healthy Nevada; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Center for Aging; and the Nevada Elder Abuse Prevention Council.

Carla Sloan has devoted her career to improving the lives of Nevada's seniors. I commend her dedicated service to the Silver State, and I wish her the best in her future endeavors and retirement.

JO MACKEY ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP AND GLOBAL COMMUNICATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication in North Las Vegas, NV. Since this elementary school opened 50 years ago, the school has been dedicated to educating our young citizens while preparing them to succeed in our culturally diverse society. Mrs. Jo Mackey spent her life focusing on the welfare and betterment of all children, and she would be proud to see her name on an elementary school with such notable success.

Jo Mackey Magnet School has made remarkable strides in the last 50 years to ensure excellence in the education of the children of Clark County. They offer special exploration classes to foster intellectual growth in areas such as communication, mathematics, art, foreign language, and many other subjects. They have hired a team of enthusiastic and dedicated staff whose effective teaching is evidenced by the high test scores of the students. In the last school year, Jo Mackey Magnet School had a higher percentage of students meet or exceed Nevada's standards in reading, mathematics, and science when compared to the county and State percentages. They also exceeded State and county rates in attendance and reported zero incidents of bullying or suspensions. Additionally, the Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication was recently recognized by the Magnet Schools of America Merit Awards Program as a Magnet School of Excellence.

Since its founding, Jo Mackey Magnet School has prepared Clark County's children to embark in a world of diversity. Students of many different ethnic and racial origins work together on projects both inside and outside of the classroom. Within the last year, students built and harvested from a school garden and learned about the importance of healthy eating.

I sincerely thank Principal Kemala Washington and the dedicated staff of Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication for their hard work in educating our children. Congratulations on 50 years of standing as a shining example of what a magnet school should be.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN AZERBAIJAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND ETHIOPIA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we have a number of challenging foreign policy issues at the moment—from Russian aggression in Ukraine to ISIL and the Syrian civil war to stemming climate change.

Yet amid these larger demands, it is important to remember there are many smaller struggles going on all over the world that are also important—struggles for basic political freedoms which can still result in jailings or worse.

Today I would like to mention a number of such brave individuals who are being detained for exercising or advocating for such democratic values.

First, I am deeply troubled by the recent crackdown on human rights activists in Azerbaijan—part of a disturbing pattern in that country that has significantly deteriorated during the last year.

The New York Times summed it up nicely in its recent editorial by describing Azeri President Aliyev as a modern-day ''Jekyll and Hyde'' who is able to convince the world that he plays nice with the West while creating one of the worst human rights records at the same time.

Aliyev wants the world to believe that Azerbaijan is a model country that promotes moderate Islam, has strong relations with the West, and is an ideal host for the upcoming European games, yet it currently holds more political prisoners than Russia and Belarus combined—not a great distinction to be sure.

At the end of 2014, Aliyev's henchmen brazenly raided Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty offices in Baku, just weeks after the government arrested one of the country's best known investigative reporters, Khadija Ismayilova. After more than 2 months of detention, she was charged with embezzlement, illegal entrepreneurship, tax evasion and abuse of power—similar charges to those of other human rights activists.

Last August, Senators CARDIN, MURPHY, and I sent a letter to President Aliyev expressing our concern over the imprisonment of Anar Mammadli and Bashir Suleymanli, the chair and the executive director of the Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center, an organization that promotes free and fair elections in Azerbaijan.

Recently, Bashir was finally released but his colleague Anar remains behind bars.

Just prior, police arrested Leyla Yunus, the director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy. The very next week, the police followed up by arresting her husband, Arif Yunus; fellow activist, Rasul Jafarov, a human rights defender and chairman of the Human Rights Club; and Intigam Aliyev, the country's most prominent human rights lawyer and the 2012 winner of the prestigious Homo Homini Award for his work defending the rule of law in Azerbaijan.