

Although our locally elected school boards may not be perfect, they represent one of the purest forms of democracy we have. Bad ideas in the small do damage in the small and are easily corrected. Bad ideas at the federal level result in massive failure and are far harder to fix."

In other words, our well-intended guidance from Washington is usually not as effective as a decision made in the home, classroom, and community by those closest to the children.

What we heard over and over again from Democrats as well as Republicans was that while continuing measurements of academic progress are important in holding schools and teachers accountable, we should respect the judgments of those closest to the children and leave to them most decisions about how to help 3.4 million teachers help 50 million children in 100,000 public schools improve student achievement.

Fifty years ago on Palm Sunday, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the first Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A good way to celebrate that anniversary is to fix the problems with the most recent version of the act so that all our children can have the best possible opportunity to learn what they need to know and be able to do in an increasingly complex world.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP WALTER SCOTT THOMAS

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Sunday, I will be honored and pleased to participate in a celebration of Bishop Walter Scott Thomas' 40th anniversary as pastor of the New Psalmist Baptist Church in Baltimore, MD. Bishop Thomas is one of the great leaders of the faith community in Baltimore. When he became pastor of New Psalmist Baptist Church in 1975, the congregation numbered 200 or so people. Today, the church has over 7,000 active members. There are Bible study classes held every day of the week, a 3-year discipleship program, leadership classes, and a school for future ministers. New Psalmist has a nationally televised broadcast, "Empowering Disciples," that can be viewed locally on WJZ TV and on the Word Network. There are three worship services on Sundays and one on Wednesday. New Psalmist is committed to caring for community and for God's creation. Classes are held to teach members how to Go Green and conserve God's creation. Every year, the church helps over 500 families at Christmas, and feeds 100 disadvantaged families each month.

Bishop Thomas is known as a pastor's pastor. He makes himself available as a mentor and source of strength for other pastors. Ten years ago, 28 sons and daughters of the New Psalmist Baptist Church who pastor churches across the Nation gathered and voted unanimously to elect Bishop Thomas as president of Kingdom Association of Covenant Pastors and to the office of bishop. Later that year, Bishop Thomas was elevated to the office of bishop and presiding prelate of The Kingdom

Association of Covenant Pastors. That historic occasion was held at the First Mariner Arena in front of over 10,000 people. The Kingdom Association of Covenant Pastors is a newly established association consisting of men and women who have been influenced by the ministry of New Psalmist Baptist Church and Bishop Thomas.

Bishop Thomas isn't content just to lead New Psalmist Baptist Church. He served as the president of the Hampton University Minister's Conference from 1999 to 2002. Under his leadership, conference attendance doubled. Bishop Thomas is also an inspirational author of books such as "Spiritual Navigation for the 21st Century" and "Good Meat Makes Its Own Gravy". He is the editor of "Outstanding Black Sermons, Volume 4". Bishop Thomas received his bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland in economics. He earned his master of divinity degree from the Howard University School of Religion in Washington, DC and a doctor of ministry degree from Saint Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore. In addition to his earned degrees, Bishop Thomas was bestowed with an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Virginia Seminary and Bethune Cookman College. Bishop Thomas and his wife and committed partner in ministry, Patricia, have three children, Joi, Walter Jr., and Joshua.

New Psalmist Baptist Church has a rich history that spans over 100 years. The church was founded by Rev. Junius Gray in 1899 as the Right Independent Freewill Baptist Church. The first members—fewer than 20 people—met in the basement of a house on Russell Terrace. In 1901, the church purchased and moved to a two-story building at 1102 Parrish Alley. In 1911, the church, renamed Psalmist Baptist Church, purchased and remodeled property at Riggs Avenue and Woodyear Street. Reverend Gray pastored Psalmist Baptist Church for 47 years.

Rev. Frederick C. Atkins was called to pastor Psalmist Baptist Church in June 1948. Under his leadership, membership grew and, because of that growth, the church purchased and moved to a new building at Druid Hill and North Avenues in 1954. The \$56,000 mortgage was paid in full and burned in 1960 and the church was renamed the New Psalmist Baptist Church. Reverend Atkins served as pastor until his sudden death on March 16, 1974. Bishop Thomas, who was called to proclaim the Word of God in 1973 under the anointed leadership of Dr. Harold Carter, pastor of the New Shiloh Baptist Church in Baltimore, took over in 1975. In 1978, New Psalmist moved from Druid Hill and North Avenues to Cathedral and Franklin Streets. While in downtown Baltimore, New Psalmist grew tremendously. In 1994, New Psalmist broke ground and 2 years later, moved from Franklin and Cathedral Street to Old Frederick Road, a multi-million dollar worship center and ministry complex on 19 acres of

land. The church continued to grow and in the fall of 2010, it moved into a brand new 4,000-seat worship facility.

New Psalmist Baptist Church is a vibrant and welcoming place. Past attendees have included the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Reverend T.D. Jakes, former President Bill Clinton in 1998, and then-Senator Barack Obama in 2007. New Psalmist Baptist Church members walk in faith and work together for the common good. The church provides job training and a fitness and health ministry; donates school supplies to children; ministers to the deaf, homeless, and prisoners and their families; hosts blood drives; partners with 12 schools across Maryland to help students, parents, and school staff members succeed in their educational mission; and is an accredited organization under the United Nations Environment Program, which seeks to create global policies that will protect our planet.

I encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Bishop Thomas and his family and friends on his 40th pastoral anniversary at New Psalmist Baptist Church and sending along best wishes to all the members of New Psalmist who know, as President John F. Kennedy said at his inauguration 54 years ago, "that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."•

TRIBUTE TO DR. GLENN STEELE

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the career of Dr. Glenn Steele upon his retirement from Geisinger Health System. Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." In his 14 years as CEO of Geisinger, Glenn Steele has been the embodiment of that idea.

Geisinger is located in Dansville, PA, and is the largest rural health services organization in the country, serving more than 3 million residents throughout 48 counties. Annually, Geisinger provides over \$400 million in community support, helping to meet the needs of all Pennsylvanians in the area, regardless of their ability to pay. Under Dr. Steele, Geisinger has been a leader in delivery system reform, improving quality of care and population health while reducing cost.

Dr. Steele is a trailblazer in the health care field. With a medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and a doctorate in microbiology from Lund University in Sweden, Dr. Steele brings a unique perspective to managing a health care system. He has authored and coauthored over 460 scientific and professional articles and has been widely recognized for his investigations into the treatment of liver cancer and colorectal cancer surgery. He is also a visionary in the area of health care delivery and financing, one of the achievements for which Geisinger is most well-known. Since

2012, Dr. Steele has served on the U.S. Congressional Budget Office's panel of health advisors, cementing his reputation as a national leader.

Dr. Steele has earned numerous awards over the years. He was named to Modern Health Care's list of the 50 Most Influential Physician Executives five times and the list of the 100 Most Influential People in Health care five times. He received the CEO IT Achievement Award in 2006, American Hospital Association's Grassroots Champion Award in 2007, the American Hospitals Association's Health Research & Education Trust Award and the HFMA Board of Directors' Award in 2011. Most recently, he was named to the Becker's Hospital Review's list of "40 of the Smartest People in Health care" for his work in health care reform. He also received the 2014 Gail L. Warden Leadership Excellence Award, which recognizes people for innovative approaches to bringing high-value and accessible health care to their communities, permanently transforming and improving the field. That final award is a testament to Geisinger's legacy and sums up Dr. Steele's vision of health care.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania, I wish Glenn Steele well in this new chapter. I have no doubt he will continue transforming health care and changing and improving the lives of people and the communities where they live.●

RECOGNIZING JILL LISTI DANCE STUDIO

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, among the best ways to introduce the arts into our local communities is through small businesses. Small businesses have the opportunity to harness the talent of their communities, fostering a culture of creativity and innovation. Such is the case with this week's Small Business of the Week: Jill Listi Dance Studio of Lafayette, LA.

When Jill Listi began teaching dance classes at the age of 15, she could not imagine where her love of dance would lead her. Opening her own studio at the age of 21, Listi has gained a reputation for training world-class, award-winning dancers of all ages and styles. A 25-year certified member of the Dance Masters of America organization, Listi continually innovates with the art of dance at her Lafayette studio. Many of Listi's dance groups, dance lines, and dance productions have won platinum medals and overall high point awards at their respective contests. With over 30 years of teaching experience, Jill Listi Dance Studio boasts a diverse and well-trained staff. Well known in the world of dance and continually expanding their knowledge of technique and style, Listi's team continues to produce and inspire top-quality dancers. Many of Listi's dancers have gone on to dance professionally in the United States as well as in Europe.

Listi's dance studio is committed to providing opportunities in the arts to

children and adults throughout Acadiana. The studio values the opportunity to introduce students to dance while instilling a firm foundation that promotes a respect and understanding for the art of dance. From professional dancer to first time student, Listi provides equal attention and instruction to all studio students. The Listi team believes that hard work produces achievement—a lesson that instills discipline in each studio student that translates into all aspects of life.

Congratulations again to Jill Listi Dance for being selected as Small Business of the Week. Thank you for being a champion for the arts in Louisiana.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED RESCISSION OF CUBA'S DESIGNATION AS A STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM—PM 13

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report and papers, which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith a report to the Congress with respect to the proposed rescission of Cuba's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, April 14, 2015.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 9. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust.

At 11:45 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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 299. An act to amend the Federal Home Loan Bank Act to authorize privately insured credit unions to become members of a Federal home loan bank, and for other purposes.

H.R. 601. An act to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual privacy notice requirement.

H.R. 1259. An act to provide for an application process for interested parties to apply for an area to be designated as a rural area, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1265. An act to apply the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

H.R. 1367. An act to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands.

H.R. 1480. An act to ensure access to certain information for financial services industry regulators, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 34. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitors Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 299. An act to amend the Federal Home Loan Bank Act to authorize privately insured credit unions to become members of a Federal home loan bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 601. An act to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual privacy notice requirement; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1259. An act to provide for an application process for interested parties to apply for an area to be designated as a rural area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1265. An act to apply the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1367. An act to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 1480. An act to ensure access to certain information for financial services industry regulators, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and referred as indicated:

S. 95. A bill to terminate the \$1 presidential coin program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.