

JIM LANGEVIN is living proof of the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a champion of expanded opportunity for people with disabilities. He fought hard for the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. He is founder and cochairman of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus in Congress. And he is a living example to his colleagues that a disability need not be a limitation. Americans of every level of ability are better off for JIM's passion and determination.

For 25 years, as the Americans with Disabilities Act removed barriers to buildings and transportation, it eliminated obstacles that once kept people from contributing to our society, growing our economy, and realizing their dreams. The equality of opportunity embodied in this law is at the very heart of our American notion of liberty. There is still work to be done, but we should cheer how far we have come, and rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the promise of the ADA. This is truly the work of forming a more perfect union.

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RECOGNIZING THE KEEP THE  
SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE COALITION  
AND BRIGADIER GENERAL  
JAMES B. THAYER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, as our Nation commemorates the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, I would like to recognize and honor the achievements of the Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive coalition, as well as the remarkable legacy of BG James B. Thayer, Sr. I am proud to speak today in recognition of the devotion exhibited by the Oregon Spirit of '45 organization, and by one of Oregon's finest.

Over the past 5 years, the Keep the Spirit of '45 coalition has been instrumental in convincing Congress, and various State legislatures, to designate an annual Spirit of '45 Day in August. I am incredibly proud that Oregon is our Nation's first State to legislate a permanent State Spirit of '45 Day to honor the valiant men and women who served on the battlefields and on America's home front. However, I am even more proud of Governor Brown's recent decision to designate the week of August 9-16 to be WWII 70th Anniversary Spirit of '45 Commemorative Week, a period of profound appreciation and reflection for the actions of a truly inspirational generation.

It has been wonderful to witness the hard work of Oregon's Spirit of '45 organization this year. From six performances across the State by Oregon's 234th Army Band to wreath laying ceremonies, all of the events took an extraordinary amount of planning and initiative. Oregon has truly developed a unique State plan to commemorate the end of WWII; a plan that not only involves an unprecedented concert tour, but that also includes a worldwide tribute coordinated with WWII allies. I also look forward to what is unfolding on the national level: the fly-

overs by WWII aircraft, the swing dances and concerts, and the performance of "Taps" during a wreath laying ceremony that will bring many great Nations together. Across Oregon and the United States, younger generations will truly appreciate our Nation's successful efforts to defend freedom worldwide, as well as the 70th anniversary of VJ Day—which marked the end of the conflict on August 14, 1945.

As I recognize the efforts of the Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive coalition, I must also express my gratitude for General Thayer, who serves as the coalition's ground forces spokesperson in Oregon. He has served as a guiding force behind the Spirit of '45 organization in Oregon. The recipient of numerous military awards, including the Silver and Bronze Stars, General Thayer helped save the lives of over 15,000 Hungarian Jewish refugees. But his legacy does not end there. Following his heroic liberation of the Nazi Death Camp Gunskirchen-Lager, General Thayer served in the Oregon State Defense Force, eventually ascending to the rank of commander. His willingness to serve his country after WWII, and work his way through the ranks, as well as his distinguished civilian career, speaks highly of his character.

It is our Nation's responsibility to ensure that the men and women who stand by our country are honored for their individual and collective sacrifices. Observing the Spirit of '45 Day begins the process of properly commemorating the sacrifices of our Nation's veterans and home front, at a time when democracy and human rights were threatened around the world.

It is also an opportunity for us to remember the shared sacrifice, commitment to service to community and country, and national unity of our WWII generation so that their example will continue to inspire future generations of Americans, especially the youth of our country.

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TRIBUTE TO COLONEL LEON  
PARROTT

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize the outstanding career of COL Leon Parrott, District Commander of the Huntington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Since the beginning of his tenure, Colonel Parrott has dutifully served our great State and was honored earlier this month during a Change of Command ceremony in Huntington.

As District Commander, his jurisdiction encompassed an area of approximately 45,000 square miles in 5 States—West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and North Carolina. The District's staff of more than 800 employees supports their mission of operating and maintaining 35 multi-purpose reservoirs and 9 dams in addition to providing flood damage reduction, commercial navigation, recreation, and water supply protection. Colonel

Parrott and his staff oversaw significant planning, design and construction efforts that imitated the replacement of outdated navigation structures, dam safety measures and other significant water resource challenges including emergency management.

Throughout his career, Colonel Parrott has held a variety of command and staff assignments including: platoon leader, company executive officer and construction officer with the 94th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade and 249th Engineer Battalion; battalion maintenance officer and company commander with the 37th Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade; assistant construction and operations officer with the 416th Engineering Command; environmental project officer and district executive officer, Europe District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; battalion operations and executive officer with the 1st Battalion, 395th Engineer Regiment; group engineer with the 5th Special Forces Group, deputy and then chief of the Emergency Operations Center for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Commander of the 326th Engineer Battalion; deputy engineer for installations, Environment and Civil/Military Operations, U.S. European Command; chief of engineering at the Defense Intelligence Agency; and, most recently, as corps engineer of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

Colonel Parrott is an outstanding soldier, friend, husband, father and student. A 1988 graduate of the Citadel, he holds a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering as well as master's degree from the University of Phoenix and the U.S. Army War College. In addition, Colonel Parrott has received numerous awards for his heroism and military duty.

I have had the honor to work with him as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives and now in the U.S. Senate. During that time, I have come to admire his dedication and selfless commitment to the mission of the Huntington Corps and its employees. I would like to wish Colonel Parrott and his wife Judy well in his next command at the North Atlantic Division of USACE in Brooklyn, NY, where he will serve as deputy division commander. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Colonel Parrott for his service.

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ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

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CONGRATULATING MICHAEL  
HERNANDEZ

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Michael Hernandez on his retirement after serving as Reno fire chief for over 5 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to creating a safe environment throughout Reno.