

express my deep gratitude to the staff, volunteers, and friends of Yosemite for all they do to protect this natural wonder, and I am pleased to join in honoring this special anniversary occasion.

OBSERVING ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. KING. Mr. President, each November we celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month to recognize the families that choose to adopt and the organizations that support them. During this month, we honor those who welcome these children into their homes and hearts, help them to grow to their full potential, and give them a better future. Today I would like to draw attention to the importance of adoption and raise awareness about youth in foster care programs, especially in Maine.

There are over 400,000 children in the foster care system, many of them waiting and hoping that the right family will come to adopt them. While many of these children are successfully returned to their birth parents and relatives, almost half are left in the system to fend for themselves. The absence of a stable family structure can be disastrous for children who are still developing psychologically and are trying to find their way in the world.

This issue has very real impacts on the future of these children and our society as a whole. Young adults who age out of the foster care system before being placed with a family are at a significantly higher risk for homelessness, incarceration, and unemployment. Alternatively, children who are adopted from foster care are more likely to achieve academic success and emotional security than their counterparts who remain in foster care. Nearly 80 percent of Americans, myself included, believe that more should be done to encourage adoption; yet, each year, tens of thousands of available children remain in the system, without families. Every child deserves to grow up in a permanent, safe, and loving home. This month, as we thank all those who have opened their hearts and homes to these children, we must acknowledge that there is still much work ahead of us.

I am proud of the important roles Maine citizens have played in promoting adoption awareness. Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc., AFFM, has been instrumental in helping children find the security they deserve and in providing support to the families who welcome them into their homes. Fostering or adopting a child can be an emotional process, and AFFM offers many services to all Maine adoptive families, including support groups, resource mentors, material goods, and a referral database for legal matters and mental health support. The adoption process is an emotional, transformative, and sometimes even stressful time for children and for their new families; therefore, the services provided by AFFM are an integral aspect of cultivating safe, joyful adop-

tions across the State. I have witnessed their hard work in action, and I am proud of all they have done for families and children across Maine.

My wife, Mary, and I have been blessed with two adoptions. I know firsthand what an amazing process adoption can be. Our experience would not have been possible without the loving support of our family, friends and community. Mary and I have been so fortunate with the joy all of our children bring to our lives every day, and I am proud to celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month.

I would like to recognize and thank Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc., and all others who facilitate adoptions throughout the country and make it possible for children in foster care to find their forever homes. Selfless, caring individuals and programs like AFFM help bring children one step closer to their dreams. They offer the hope of love and security to future generations, and for that, they deserve our immense gratitude.

RECOGNIZING COWBOYS AGAINST CANCER

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to recognize one of Wyoming's most generous groups, Cowboys Against Cancer. Founded in 1994 by cancer survivor Margaret Parry, Cowboys Against Cancer raises funds for residents of Sweetwater County who have been diagnosed with cancer. Touched by those who aided and encouraged her during her own battle with cancer, Margaret created Cowboys Against Cancer in order to provide the same comfort to those battling this awful disease. Margaret's mission—and that of Cowboys Against Cancer—is one of compassion and support. From offering the comfort of a shoulder to lean on to awarding grants to support overburdened individuals and families, Cowboys Against Cancer has waged a tireless battle against cancer.

As a nonprofit volunteer organization, Cowboys Against Cancer is a proud group devoted exclusively to charity. The organization's volunteers work without compensation, and Cowboys Against Cancer employs no staff members. Without staff on the payroll, no office space, and very little overhead, the majority of the profits generated are donated directly to those in need. Since the organization's inception, Cowboys Against Cancer has given hundreds of grants to local cancer patients, including more than 150 grants in 2015 alone. In addition to these grants, the group has also worked to fund the development of cancer treatment infrastructure throughout Sweetwater County to better serve the regional population.

This year marks the 21st and final Cowboys Against Cancer Annual Benefit and Banquet. Over 1,000 people will gather to both celebrate the memories of those who are no longer with us and

recognize the exemplary courage and determination exhibited by cancer survivors. Including the donations raised from this capstone gala, Cowboys Against Cancer estimates that they will have awarded a total of \$5 million of grants to folks in Wyoming. This is a remarkable achievement.

Margaret has a tremendous team of volunteers who have helped her make this dream a reality. Over the years, dozens upon dozens of folks have worked for this great organization. I would like to recognize the current board of directors and the people who have volunteered for 10 years or more. The Cowboys Against Cancer board of directors are: Margaret Parry, president and founder; George Lemich, vice president and auction officer; Cindy Petersen, historian; Kristi Parry, secretary; Erika Kosher, banquet; Anita Punders, treasurer; Terry Warren, grant disbursements; Kathy Devoy, invitations and tickets; Cindy Rodriguez, advertising; and Geannie Berg, auction item data base.

The kind, generous, and energetic volunteers who have lent a hand for over 10 years are Sandra DaRif, Danella "Prune" Devries, Pat Devoy, Debbie Gunn, Mary Hardy, Beth Ice, Mary Juel, Veldon Kraft, Don Melvin, Vance Petersen, Kyle and Patsy Rossetti, Becky Sanchez, Kelly Shablo, Bess Stevenson, Liz Strannigan, Tim Warren, and Donald Wiggen. Students from Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs High School, and Green River High School have always been generous with their time. And, finally, a special note of thanks to Al Harris who serves as the event's master of ceremonies.

Please join me in offering my heartfelt congratulations to Margaret Parry and her Cowboys Against Cancer team for their efforts toward creating a cancer-free world. This organization has exemplified the nature of the cowboy spirit: tough, but neighborly. Sweetwater County—and Wyoming—are better, thanks to the selfless contributions of Margaret Parry and Cowboys Against Cancer.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY MITCHELL

● Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I wish to celebrate and congratulate the recent accomplishments of Ms. Ashley Mitchell. At only 4-foot-9-inches tall and 94 pounds, Ashley holds the title of Weight Lifting World Champion.

The daughter of Anticia S. Mitchell and a native of Alexandria, LA, Ashley is a hard-working honor roll senior with a 3.0 GPA at Alexandria Senior High School, ASH. In addition to her academic triumphs, Ashley is also a dynamic athlete. During Ashley's freshman year of high school, ASH powerlifting coach Duane Urbina introduced her to the sport. With her mother's encouragement to take a risk and

to try something new, Ashley embraced the opportunity wholeheartedly.

Ashley has achieved several impressive titles as a result of her hard work. Ashley is a three-time first place North Regional Champion, as well as the North Regional Most Outstanding Lifter on the light-weight platform. Additionally, Ashley broke the bench and deadlift records at North Regionals. Moreover, Ashley is a three-time first place Louisiana State Champion. Ashley has earned the Billy Jack Talton Award for Best Lifter in the State of Louisiana and has placed second at both the national meet in Killeen, TX, for 2013–2014 and the national meet in Milwaukee, WI, for 2014–2015.

On May 15, 2015, Ashley earned first place at the Men's and Women's Powerlifting National Meet in San Antonio, TX; Ashley's first place award qualified her to join TEAM USA and to compete at the International Powerlifting Federation, IPF, Championship held in Prague, Czech Republic, on August 28–September 6, 2015.

Talented competitors from 28 nations competed at the IPF Championship. Ashley rose to the challenge, receiving the gold medal in the 94.5 pound weight class for the Sub-Junior and Junior USA Team. Ashley earned the second place silver medal for squatting 275 pounds, the first place gold medal for benching 159.5 pounds, and the first place gold medal for deadlifting 326.5 pounds. Each lift event included three attempts. On Ashley's second attempt for the deadlift, she broke the world record by lifting 309.1 pounds; Ashley immediately broke this record on her third attempt by lifting 326.5 pounds, now the new world record. Ashley also set the new world record for total weight lifted, by lifting a combined 761 pounds during the squat, bench, and deadlift events.

Powerlifting is both physically and mentally demanding, but not insurmountable for Ashley, who finds support in God, her family, her coach, and her powerlifting team. Through blood, sweat, and tears, Ashley welcomes the challenges and celebrates how the sport teaches her about how to overcome life's obstacles.

Ashley Mitchell makes our community, State, and country very proud. Today I join my colleagues in honoring this young woman's tremendous effort and dedication.●

RECOGNIZING THE 366TH FIGHTER WING

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I wish to honor Mountain Home Air Force Base's 366th Fighter Wing, which recently earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Congratulations to the skilled and dedicated men and women who serve in the 366th Fighter Wing for their outstanding service to our Nation.

The Outstanding Unit Award was created 61 years ago. According to the Air

Force Personnel Center, it is awarded by the Secretary of the Air Force to units that "distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service or outstanding achievement."

The 366th FW earned the award for the period of June 1, 2014, to May 31, 2015, and is credited with 9,200 hours spent in the air. When making the nomination, U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Mark C. Nowland cited the fighter wing's "determination and relentless pursuit of excellence." He noted a number of the wing's accomplishments: the successful use of airpower during Republic of Korea theater security package operations; the Gunfighters expanded their airspace by 25 percent, supporting seven military branches from five countries during five major exercises; and the achievement of an impeccable personal training pass rate. Lieutenant General Nowland wrote, "Whether at home training for current and future contingencies or sending Airmen downrange to complete combat operations, the Gunfighters exemplify the Fly, Fight and Win ethos."

The more than 4,680 military and civilian members and approximately 4,590 family members of the 366th FW have a long history of excellence. It has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 17 times, dating back to its accomplishments in 1966 and as recent as 2012. The work of the wing's servicemembers also earned Meritorious Unit Awards in both 2008 and 2009. These are just a few of its recognitions.

Various divisions of the wing have also received numerous awards. The wing's maintenance group was acknowledged as "Outstanding Maintenance Unit" for their efforts during a massive aerial combat training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. The 366th Security Forces Squadron was also named "Most Outstanding Security Forces Medium Unit in Air Combat Command." The 366th Force Support Squadron was selected as the best force support squadron in Air Combat Command, ACC, and the base's medical group is the top rated in ACC.

The commitment and dedication of the thousands of courageous and accomplished Americans who call Idaho home is beyond impressive. We are blessed to have many knowledgeable and brave individuals and their families protecting our Nation. I congratulate the 366th Fighter Wing on its many successes.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. DONALD WILLIAMSON

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure and the highest regard that I speak on the accomplishments of my valued constituent and friend, Dr. Donald Williamson. On October 31, 2015, Dr. Williamson concluded 23 years as Alabama's State health officer and 29 years of service in the Department of Public Health.

Dr. Williamson has served the public health community for more than 30

years, first in his home State of Mississippi and in Alabama since 1986. He began his career in Alabama as the director of the Division of Disease Control from 1986 to 1988. He then served as the director of the Bureau of Preventative Health Services from 1988 to 1992, when he was appointed as the State health officer and director of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Dr. Williamson received his medical degree, cum laude, from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Virginia Hospital.

His devotion to health and public service has been recognized on numerous occasions. He received the 2011 Nathan Davis Award from the AMA for outstanding public service by a career public servant at the State level; the 2009 Wallace Alexander Clyde Award from Children's Hospital; the 2000 Arthur T. McCormack Award from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials for dedication and excellence in public health; the 1999 Theodore R. Ervin Award from the Public Health Foundation; and the 1999 Child Health Advocate Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics. He also was the recipient of the 1997 D.G. Gill Award from the Alabama Public Health Association for outstanding contribution to public health in Alabama and the 1998 Internist of the Year Award from the Alabama Society of Internal Medicine. In addition, he has held leadership roles in several national and State organizations, including the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

For the last 3 years, Dr. Williamson has held two of the largest jobs in State government, serving both as health officer and chairman of the Alabama Medicaid Transition Taskforce. Governor Robert Bentley appointed Dr. Williamson to serve as chairman of the transition taskforce at a time when the Medicaid Program was on the brink of failing.

During his tenure, All Kids, Alabama's public health insurance for children, was recognized nationally for its success in reducing the number of uninsured children. As the chairman of the Medicaid transition taskforce, he helped rescue the Alabama Medicaid Agency and restructured the Medicaid Program. Under his direction, the Medicaid Program will be transformed into Regional Care Organizations and Patient Care Networks. This new structure represents a shift from treating an illness or injury to focusing on overall health and well-being and will lead to improved health outcomes for many Alabamians.

Dr. Williamson has demonstrated the ability to find solutions for seemingly insurmountable challenges and has been a calm, strong voice of reason and common sense in the most difficult of times. Throughout his career, he continued to find new ways of making Medicaid work for its patients and the physicians who treat them.