

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