RECOGNIZING THE SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America on reaching a significant milestone of 50 years of service in our State. It gives me great pleasure to recognize this entity that does so much for Nevada's veterans, active military members, and their families.

For half a century, the southern Nevada chapter has provided southern Nevada's military community with an incredible support system to address a diverse range of veterans and active military members' issues. The organization offers our Nation's brave men and women advice and guidance on compensation and benefits, as well as raises money to benefit Wounded Warriors, ROTC scholarships, and other entities helping our heroes who have defended our freedoms. The southern Nevada chapter spearheaded the Veterans Court Program, which gives veterans a second chance and helps to expunge misdemeanors from their records, so long as they participate in a rehabilitation program, perform community service, and maintain a positive lifestyle.

Southern Nevada's military community is fortunate to have this chapter working as an ally to improve the lives of veterans. The organization also advocates on behalf of America's national defense, an issue I believe is crucial for our country. I am grateful to each and every member of this organization for their service and sacrifice in defending our Nation. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women who sacrifice their lives for our freedoms. Their service is invaluable to our country.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have had no greater honor than the opportunity to engage with the men and women who served in our Nation's military. I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am grateful to have organizations like the southern Nevada chapter working towards a common goal: fighting to ensure the needs of our veterans are met.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, an organization with a noble and charitable mission. I am humbled and honored to recognize its 50th anniversary, and I wish to thank all of the hardworking members for everything they do.•

REMEMBERING THAIS F. O'DONNELL BLATNIK

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of a dear friend and a remarkable West Virginian who passed away on December 9th, 2015. Former West Virginia State senator and house of delegates member, Thais F. O'Donnell Blatnik, was a dedicated public servant and an inspiring leader who was respected and admired by all who knew her. She led an extraordinary life that will always be remembered in the hearts of the countless individuals whose lives she touched.

Thais was a proud West Virginian from our State's northern panhandle. She was born and raised in the town of Weirton, where she grew up with her loving parents and her two younger sisters, Eileen and Kay. It was there in the small town of Weirton that Thais would plant her roots and cultivate an inherent love and commitment to her community, the northern panhandle region, and her entire State.

Thais went on to live a long and prosperous life, filled with immense success. But she never strayed too far from her loved ones and friends in Weirton and the northern panhandle. After graduating from high school, she attended and graduated from West Liberty University and launched a tireless career in journalism. After college, Thais returned to her beloved hometown to work for the Weirton Daily Times. She also spent part of her career working for the Wheeling Intelligencer and as an editor for the Dominion Post.

During her journalism career, Thais developed her inquisitive nature along with her passion for asking the hard questions. She was a true force, and she was tough but fair when it came to telling the news. She covered all levels of politics, and she even had the opportunity to interview three U.S. Presidents: President Kennedy, President Ford, and President Roosevelt. As a result of her work in journalism, she was emboldened to run for office herself and to stand up for the northern panhandle communities she loved so dearly.

Just as Thais was a fierce journalist, she became an equally strong and passionate public servant. Genuinely committed to improving the lives of all West Virginians, she represented Ohio County for 8 years in the house of delegates and another 8 years in the State senate. I was proud to work alongside her and call her my colleague during my time in the State senate. Thais spent her time at the statehouse fighting to improve the lives of all West Virginians, but specifically women and children and those struggling with mental health and disabilities. She was honored for her great work and for her service as Mental Health Directors Legislator of the Year and recognized by the West Virginia Association for the Developmentally Disabled for her faithful work helping children with exceptionalities. Thais also served as the executive director of the Wheeling Area Training Center for the Handicapped, WATCH.

Thais was not only reputable and accomplished in her public life, but she was also an unparalleled example of a devoted wife, a proud mother, and a wonderful grandmother. She was married to the late Dr. Albert M. Blatnik for more than 48 years and paid tribute to him in a book she wrote titled ''Here's Al.'' Thais received love and support throughout her life from Al as well as her children—Floyd, Judy, and David—and her grandchildren—Katie, Jack, Joe, Maggie, and Sam—who lovingly called her ''Meme.'' During their lives, Thais and Al led their grandchildren across the country introducing them to exciting new experiences.

Anyone who knew Thais Blatnik can tell you about her incredible passion for her community and her State and her ability to inspire each person she encountered. She made a difference throughout West Virginia and will be forever remembered for her many years of service. She was truly a hero to so many in our State, and though she will be greatly missed, her memory will always live on.•

RECOGNIZING THE HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Henry Ford Health System as it celebrates delivering a century of high-quality and innovative health care services to the metropolitan Detroit community.

In 1909, Henry Ford, David Whitney, and a few other leading Detroit-area businessmen recognized the need for a major health care center in Detroit and set out to open Detroit General Hospital. After experiencing several years of delays, Henry Ford took over the entire project and renamed the facility ''Henry Ford Hospital'', which opened its doors to the public on October 1, 1915.

From the outset, Henry Ford was focused upon adapting the insights and innovations he pioneered in the automotive industry for use in the delivery of health care services. Among his innovations were a first-in-the-Nation center for treating chemical dependency and an accountability system for promoting shorter patient waiting times. Over the years, Henry Ford Health System's commitment to innovation saw breakthroughs in the administration of electrocardiograms, improvements in the design of hospital beds, and advancements in medication regiments for treating bacterial infections.

Throughout its history, Henry Ford Health System has been committed to meet the evolving needs of the metro Detroit region. Recognizing the need for access to low-cost health care services, Henry Ford Hospital partnered with the State of Michigan in 1970 to