

with heart failure. With that in mind, I was pleased that S. Res. 256 passed the Senate by unanimous consent.●

#### TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and to salute our Nation's Veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs has designated the week of February 13–19 as "National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week." I take this opportunity to pay special tribute to those veterans who are currently hospitalized, especially those hospitalized in the Battle Creek, MI, VA Medical Center.

These brave people served their country in time of need. Many of them were wounded. Many of them knew others who never came home from battle. It is only right, then, that our nation help them in time of physical need.

The Battle Creek VA Medical Center provides an excellent example of how our nation can repay some of the debt it owes our brave veterans. This facility has provided quality care for up to 325 residents at a time for over 75 years. It is an important part of our system of 172 VA Medical Centers across the United States, and an important part of the Battle Creek community.

I know that a festive schedule of special events has been planned for the week long salute. Our veterans, and particularly those who are currently hospitalized, certainly deserve every tribute we can give to them. And the same goes for the dedicated men and women who care for them.

The American people will be forever indebted to our veterans and their families. Without their sacrifice, dedication, and unwavering commitment to our nation and its ideals, America would not be the beacon of freedom it is today. I ask that you and my colleagues join me in saluting the veterans at the Battle Creek VA Medical Center and each and every individual who has served with distinction in the U.S. Armed Forces. Let us say to them: We salute you and we thank you.●

#### HONORING MARY FORD, MAYOR OF NORTHAMPTON

● Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the public service of Mary Ford, who recently stepped down as the Mayor of Northampton, Massachusetts. Throughout her 8 years in office, Mayor Ford has elevated the City to one of the jewels of New England, and I join all of her friends, family, and constituents in honoring her today.

As Mayor of Northampton, Ms. Ford oversaw the improvement of the school system, conducted comprehensive infrastructure improvements, modernized city services, and restored fiscal discipline. Perhaps the largest measure of her contributions to the city rests in the fact that, in the course of man-

aging an annual budget of \$55 million dollars, she erased a \$3.2 million deficit. This financial turn-around allowed the city to entertain larger goals; the renovation and expansion of Northampton High School, the establishment of an innovative trust to preserve Section 8 assistance, and establishing Northampton as an attractive place to start new businesses.

Her leadership on the budget, which includes the general fund, schools, and enterprise funds, has been complemented by computerizing all the city office's and raising hiring standards. She set the policy priorities for all the city's administrative departments, including; housing, health and safety inspection services, planning, culture and arts, finance, as well as economic and community development. Mayor Ford orchestrated all of these elements into a cohesive, focused set of services that was delivered in an effective and efficient manner, thus improving the lives of all residents.

Due to Mary Ford's leadership, The City of Northampton is now one of the state's thriving, growing cities.

The list of her accomplishments on behalf of the city's revitalization is varied and extensive; she improved the city's emergency response capabilities by allotting \$5.5 million for a state-of-the-art firehouse, renovated one third of the city's roads, and conducted comprehensive traffic re-designing for increased safety. Her accomplishments in education include securing an investment of \$25 million for the modernization of Northampton's high school, a \$12 million middle school expansion program, and work with the entire system's faculty and staff in implementing staff recommendations, reforming curriculum, and increasing parental involvement.

She has also shared her expertise in municipal and governmental affairs with state and national organizations. From 1995–99, she was a member of the Human Development Committee in the National League of Cities, a founding member of the Regional Education Business Alliance, Chair of the Task Force on the Future of State and Local Revenue Sharing for the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and President of the Women Elected Municipal Officials organization in 1998.

Mr. President, I am proud to regard Mary Ford as a friend, colleague and partner in maintaining Massachusetts's economic prosperity and growth. She has performed an enormous task for the City and its residents, and I join with all of Northampton in thanking her for her exemplary public service and leadership.●

#### HONORING THE 110TH FIGHTER WING OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the proud achievements of the 110th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard. This group was re-

cently awarded the prestigious United States Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for meritorious service, an award given to only three Air National Guard fighter wings. I would like to take this opportunity to share the history of success of this unit.

The 110th Fighter Wing has served America courageously around the world. Recently, the unit conducted flight operations from Aviano Air Base, Italy, in support of Operation Joint Guard over Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this period, the unit received a grade of "Outstanding"—an honor reserved for only the elite forces in the U.S. Armed Services—for an Operational Readiness Inspection. This distinction was the first ever given to a Michigan-based unit.

Mr. President, I would also like to recognize the service of Col. Ken Heaton, USAF, the unit's commander. Under Colonel Heaton's command, the 110th Fighter Wing has continued its history of excellence with these most recent awards. In the unit's 52-year history, it has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award four times.

I am proud to have the opportunity to share the accomplishments of the 110th Fighter Wing on the floor of the U.S. Senate. On behalf of the State of Michigan, I congratulate Colonel Heaton and his unit on their achievements, and I look forward to hearing of this unit's laurels for years to come.●

#### AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to spend a few minutes discussing the Agricultural Cooperation Agreement that was signed by the United States and China in December in Seattle. Although the negotiations for this agreement were held at the same time as the bilateral WTO accession negotiations between our two countries, this agriculture agreement is a stand-alone arrangement. According to its own terms, it formally entered into effect when U.S. Trade Representative Barshefsky and Chinese Trade Minister Shi signed it.

This agreement deals with three categories of agriculture products—Pacific Northwest wheat, meat, and citrus. The agreement requires that sound science be used when evaluating agricultural imports into China. Specifically, the agreement ends the decade-long prohibition that China had against importing Pacific Northwest wheat. It provides for US government certification of meat packing facilities. And it eliminates unreasonable technical barriers to the export of citrus products from the United States to China.

On February 11, 52 other Senators, Democrats and Republicans alike, joined me in sending a letter to Chinese President Jiang Zemin, insisting that China needs to implement the Agricultural Cooperation Agreement immediately. We explained to President