

transportation, and other civic facilities far more successfully than ever before.

Just as I was a proud supporter of the ADA then, I was a proud supporter of the resolution which the Senate passed last week, introduced by my colleagues Senators HARKIN and HATCH, commemorating the 20th anniversary of that historic achievement. I would like to thank Senator HARKIN in particular for his leadership on the passage of the ADA.

I would also like to thank my former Connecticut colleague, Lowell Weicker, who, as a Senator in 1988, was the original sponsor of the legislation that went on to become the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is still a national leader in advocating for individuals with disabilities.

Without their tireless efforts and support, it would not have been possible to pass this legislation those 20 years ago.

Equal protection under the law is not a privilege in the United States of America—rather, it is a fundamental right due every citizen, regardless of race, gender, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability. It is unacceptable to deny any individual his or her right to those protections because of a disability. Our country has an obligation to its citizens to ensure that their fundamental rights are protected, and, if those rights are violated, that the appropriate recourse is available.

In 2008, the overall percentage of people with a disability in my home State of Connecticut was 10.4 percent; approximately 350,000 residents. That is 350,000 reasons why 20 years later, I am proud of—and somewhat awed by—the impact this bill has made. And that is just in my home State. Across the entire country, more than 50 million people have been aided by the passage of this historic legislation.

The resolution that we passed in this body last week honors and commemorates the 20th anniversary of the ADA. We passed it 100–0. This strong, bipartisan statement underscores the far reaching importance of this landmark law. I am proud to not only have been able to vote for its passage those 20 years ago, but also to have been an original cosponsor along with several of my colleagues still present in this body, including Chairman HARKIN.

As we take this opportunity to commemorate the tremendous advances the disability community has made, we must not forget the steadfast support of the wide network of groups and individuals who have made it their mission to help every single American, despite his or her disability, reach his or her fullest potential, and which made this extraordinary achievement possible.

I have worked closely with these groups throughout my tenure in the Senate to ensure they have gotten the support they need from the Federal Government, especially the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. I thank them for their support and as-

sistance, and truly value the working relationships I have established over my entire career.

In my capacity as a senior member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, I have spent my career fighting alongside my colleagues to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Some of the most important pieces of legislation I have introduced or supported throughout my career have been to further that goal. From the Disability Savings Act, a bill I introduced in 2008 which would encourage individuals with disabilities and their families to start disability savings accounts for their unique disability-related needs, to the Best Buddies Empowerment for People with Intellectual Disabilities Act, a bill I introduced earlier this Congress with Senator HATCH which promotes the expansion of that acclaimed program. I am hopeful we can pass this important legislation this year.

I am also pleased that the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act makes further progress toward meeting the needs of the disabled community. That legislation incorporates an important idea known as the CLASS Act, which creates a voluntary disability insurance program designed to pay for nonmedical and support services so that persons with disabilities are able to live independently. Getting this program started was a remarkable achievement, and something many of my colleagues and I had worked for many years to accomplish.

Of course, none of the important advances we have made, legislatively or otherwise, would have been possible without the tireless work of one of the great advocates for equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities that the Senate has ever seen—my dear friend, the late Senator Ted Kennedy. For Teddy, the issue of fairness and empowerment for individuals with disabilities was always in the forefront of his mind and legislative agenda. Along with his late sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver, his commitment to this issue, which touches so many of our fellow citizens, is a legacy that we must seek to preserve and to continue.

On this, the 26th day of July 2010, I urge my colleagues and fellow citizens to celebrate the freedom and opportunities provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and recognize the strides we have made to raise the employment and graduation rates, increase self-sufficiency, and very simply, lift the self-esteem of those who for too long were denied these opportunities.

As we strive to perfect our Union, we must remember that we are a just society. We are a society that has enshrined the notion of equality, both in rights and opportunity, for all in our very founding documents. We must continue to reaffirm the promise made in those documents to each citizen, no matter their race, creed, or circumstance.

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act is one example of how we have worked to keep those promises. It represents a successful step toward fulfilling our Nation's goals of equality of opportunity, independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and full participation for Americans with disabilities. It has been a tremendous honor to have been able to support this law, and as I look back on the good it has done, 20 years later, I am confident that future generations will continue to build on its success as a cornerstone to ensuring that all Americans have equal access to the American dream.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, I join Arkansans and all Americans to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, known as ADA. This legislation has literally opened doors for countless Arkansans living with disabilities.

ADA protects the civil rights of all people with disabilities by expanding opportunities for Arkansans and all Americans with disabilities and by reducing barriers, changing perceptions and allowing all Americans to go to the schools of their choice, gain meaningful employment, and fully participate in community life.

This week, communities across Arkansas will commemorate the 20th anniversary of ADA with events and celebrations, including construction of wheelchair ramps by volunteers and a 5K Roll n' Walk Run event on the Fayetteville trail system in northwest Arkansas.

I commend these volunteers and participants for their dedication to ensuring that Arkansans with disabilities have full access to the resources they need, in addition to promoting ADA's anniversary.

On the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I join my fellow Arkansans to celebrate this historic legislation that has touched the lives of so many in our State and Nation.

REMEMBERING SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I join my colleagues in paying tribute to our colleague Robert Byrd of West Virginia. He served his beautiful mountain State for a record-setting 57 years in Congress, including 51 years in this Chamber. He cast more rollcall votes and served in more leadership positions than any other Senator in U.S. history, including 12 years as his party's leader. He revered this body so much that he wrote four volumes on Senate history from 1789 to 1989. Over nine terms, he mastered parliamentary procedure in an effort to protect the Senate's rules and to defend the legislative branch's authority. He carried a copy of the Constitution in his pocket, and he peppered his speeches with frequent references to the intent of our Framers. When asked how many Presidents he had served under, he replied, "None. I

have served with Presidents, not under them.”

Senator Byrd will enter the history books as one of the Senate’s true giants, but his beginnings were humble. His biography is a shining testament to the American dream. He was adopted in infancy and raised in impoverished coal-mining towns. His first job was to collect garbage scraps for his family’s hogs. Although he graduated valedictorian of his 1934 high school class, at first he could not afford college. He married his high school sweetheart, Erma Ora James, with whom he enjoyed 68 happy years. The outstanding work ethic and solid values that he learned while growing up in Raleigh County helped him later devote 10 grueling years of his life to studying while simultaneously serving as a Member of Congress. When he finally earned his law degree in 1963, President John F. Kennedy awarded him his diploma.

Senator Byrd served his beloved home State with unprecedented devotion. He wrote in his autobiography that “it has been my constant desire to improve the lives of the people who have sent me to Washington time and again.” Virtually every county in West Virginia will long remember his hard work, dedication, and legendary contributions. Like many Americans today, I commend him for his outstanding service to his State, to our Nation, and to the institution of the Senate.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS MICHAEL SHANE
PRIDHAM, JR.

Mr. BAYH. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of PFC Michael Shane Pridham, Jr. of the U.S. Army.

Private Pridham was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment. He was only 19 years old when he lost his life serving bravely in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Qalat, Afghanistan. He was 6 weeks from completing his tour of duty.

Private Pridham—“Mikey” as he was known to his family and friends—was from Louisville, KY. He attended Southern High School before later earning his GED diploma through the U.S. Army.

Today, I join Private Pridham’s family and friends in mourning his death. He is survived by his wife Deidre, whom he married 2 days before deploying overseas and who is expecting the couple’s first child, Aliyah, in October; his father and stepmother, Michael Shane and Andrea Pridham Sr. of New Albany, IN; his mother, Keri Allen of Louisville, KY; and his brothers, Jeffrey Pridham, Joey Pridham, Kaleb Nix and Kaden Eskridge.

We take pride in the example of this American hero, even as we struggle to express our sorrow over this loss. We cherish the legacy of his service and his life.

As I search for words to honor this fallen soldier, I recall President Lin-

coln’s words to the families of the fallen at Gettysburg: “We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.”

It is my sad duty to enter the name of PFC Michael Shane Pridham, Jr. in the RECORD of the U.S. Senate for his service to our country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace.

I pray that Mikey’s family finds comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah, who said: “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.”

WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Madam President, I come to the floor of the Senate to talk today about the recently passed Wall Street reform bill.

I believe elected officials should come to Washington to solve problems not ignore them. The American people know that we need to enact major changes to our financial regulatory system. With the bill that passed into law earlier this month, Congress has begun the process of repairing a regulatory system that did not work as it should have and contributed to the financial meltdown that shook our economy in 2008. This action, long overdue, will help our regulatory structure catch up with the realities of the market so as to provide a more secure economy. Although no bill will ever be perfect, and I remain seriously concerned that we must take further actions if we are going to prevent another financial crisis, this bill takes important steps towards greater market transparency and consumer protection. It will help make sure that taxpayers are never again put on the hook for bailing out the financial sector. It strengthens the regulatory safety net in key respects. For these reasons, I supported cloture motions and final passage of the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

I did my utmost to work in a bipartisan manner on this bill, filing or cosponsoring 27 amendments, working across the aisle on almost all of them. For example, we amended the bill to remove unnecessary provisions that would have severely constricted small startup businesses around the country as they worked to raise capital from angel investors. Massachusetts is one of America’s hotbeds for innovation and business startups, and I was proud to stand up for small startup businesses and the investors who help give life to their ideas. Another amendment I proposed with Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island, which was adopted 99-1, created a dedicated liaison office for military families within the Consumer

Financial Protection Bureau, so that members of our Armed Forces and their families can fight back when they are targeted by unscrupulous lenders or sold fraudulent life insurance policies. As a 30-year member of the National Guard, I have seen the pain caused when members of the Guard are hit by financial predators. I was also proud to join my colleagues in supporting assessment and regulatory relief for small community banks and a safer role for the credit rating agencies in our financial system.

Since the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs did not hold a full markup of the bill before it came to the Senate floor, I spent a lot of time exploring how certain provisions were drafted and how they might work if enacted into law. One of those areas was the so-called Volcker rule. I believe that the principles behind the Volcker rule, which was proposed in earnest only after the House had passed its own Wall Street Reform bill, are very well-intentioned and in many respects will be quite effective. The Volcker rule was conceived as a way to limit certain risky proprietary trading activities so that Wall Street firms start to look more like the safe banks, mutual funds, and insurance companies we have in Massachusetts. After the collapse the country suffered, no one can argue with a straight face anymore that all banks should be able to take huge risks on anything they want, whenever they want, without any regard to the consequences. This was an important issue for financial institutions and regulators across the country. Senator KAY HAGAN of North Carolina also worked hard to find the right balance within the Volcker rule for bank asset management, and I would like to associate my views with her statements in the Senate RECORD on this topic.

Without changes, the original Senate bill would have unreasonably regulated limited purpose trusts—institutions throughout our Nation that never should have been captured in the regulatory “net” of Volcker rule bank regulation. Since the drafting did not match the intent, this problem was addressed by clarifying that these companies should not be subject to bank holding company oversight or the Volcker rule restrictions by virtue of operating a limited purpose trust regardless of charter. In other words, bank regulation should only apply to the trust itself, not its parent and affiliates. Without this clarification, the Volcker rule restrictions, as well as the capital requirements under the adopted Collins amendment, would have led to widespread disruption in providing products and services to customers and investors, job losses, and uncertainty around the nation. The final version of the legislation appropriately does not regulate institutions with limited