

that ever lived. Solomon wrote all those proverbs that are recorded in the Bible."

Gross did not have many disciplinary problems with the students on the bus and when he did, he usually handled them himself.

Gross, now 64, started driving a school bus in 1969 when he was 21 years old. He also painted houses between routes and has been the pastor at London Community Church for almost 43 years.

"I had a double route, which most drivers did," Gross recalled. "I left this community and went to the next community which is White Oak. I transported all of the children first through 12th grade to Swiss Colony and then I would drop all of the kids and go to Mitchell Creek, which is back by Interstate 75 just on the west side of 75. Then I would go through that community and would pick up just elementary kids and bring them back on what was old Route 80 at the time. It's (Ky.) 1956 now. I would run that route from Interstate 75 along with Mitchell Creek and transport them back to Swiss Colony. I did that for a short time."

Gross drove the White Oak route for five years and then he let someone else take it over who lived in that community. He then took a dangerous route on Old Ky. 80.

"It was a very dangerous route because of the truck traffic. We didn't have a four-lane road then," he said. "I drove all the way down to the Rockcastle River. I drove that route for 23 or 24 years. There were a lot of crooked places where I had to pick up kids on the opposite side of a curve. I've had trucks slide at me sideways. A couple of times it was quite frightening."

In 1997, Gross started driving a town route with special-needs students. He said it was not as hectic as driving a route with all the age groups.

Over the years while driving a school bus, Gross had two or three minor accidents and one that could have been very dangerous.

"It was a day in March. It would snow and then it would melt, then freeze and then snow some more, melt and freeze," he recalled. "The officials kept an eye on most of the main roads, but just about 3 o'clock it started freezing and snowing. I picked up a load at South High School and came to (Ky.) 1956. I made a stop just under the crest of a hill, probably 150 to 200 yards away. A car came over the hill just after I dropped off two girls. The car stopped in time. Another car came over the crest and when she braked, she hit the little car in the rear end and spun it around and pushed it back into a driveway."

"One of the girls managed to run across the road and over to the edge of a bank," he continued. "The car that caused all of this bounced off that little car and into my lane and hit my bus head on and went underneath the bus. The other girl who had gotten off the bus was clipped on the knee by the car that caused the accident. She only had a minor injury. The drivers of the two cars weren't hurt. I thought both girls were going to be pinned between my bus and the car."

Gross said the officer who worked the accident did not mandate the girl who was hurt be taken to the hospital to be checked out.

"I was quite surprised after it was all over and when I went home, I called back to the child's home and I took my little car and waited until her father got home from work and we took her to the hospital."

One of Gross's memorable moments on the bus route was the day two boys were cutting up and joking. They were sitting up front so that he could keep an eye on them.

"They were cutting up quite a bit, joking, teasing and laughing," Gross said. "That didn't bother me. I was listening to them. One of them said something kind of funny. I thought I could be cute so I said something

I thought topped what he had said. He looked at his little buddy—they were both elementary kids—"Tell you what," he said, 5,000 comedians in this country out of a job and look what we're stuck with. I got so tickled I didn't even try to top that line."

"I had a good relationship with almost all of the students I hauled," Gross added. "A lot of the older age groups are grown up now and are good friends of mine."

Gross is married to Yvonne and they have three children—Suzanne Gray, Cheryl Winters, and Delmer Paul Gross.

#### ILLINOIS JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, as a proponent of smart and fair crime policies, as well as improving the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, I would like to commend my home State of Illinois for its recent reforms in this area. I have long supported and sponsored legislation in Congress to ensure that children are treated appropriately, whether they are sexually exploited victims who do not belong in the criminal justice system, or whether they commit crimes and deserve targeted assistance or punishment. As one of several States in the Nation moving away from a punishment-based juvenile justice system and toward one of rehabilitation and prevention, Illinois has been nationally recognized for its progress. Two recent laws in particular have advanced our treatment of youth in the criminal justice system in Illinois.

First, as of January 1, 2010, 17-year-old misdemeanants in Illinois are no longer automatically filtered into the adult justice system. Under Public Act 95-1031, 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors will now have access to the juvenile courts rather than the adult system. This change will allow more youth to participate in much-needed rehabilitation services such as mental health, drug treatment, and community-based services.

In addition, the state legislature took another step forward by enacting Public Act 96-1199 last year. This law requires the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission to study the impact of expanding the juvenile court's jurisdiction to 17-year-olds charged with felonies. It also requires the Commission to develop timelines, propose a funding structure, and submit a final report to the Illinois General Assembly by December 31, 2011.

These new State laws will help our state use its resources more effectively and give more young people the opportunity to live productive lives. In their efforts to further these goals, I would also like to commend two of our juvenile justice advocates in Illinois. Betsy Clarke is the founder and president of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative and has spent more than 20 years advocating for the youth of our state. Along with leading efforts to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult criminal courts, she has supported Redeploy Illinois, a program that emphasizes com-

munity-based alternatives over secure confinement. Redeploy Illinois has saved Illinois taxpayers millions in corrections costs. Ms. Clarke also played a role in the formation of the new Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and legislation requiring early counsel so youth can obtain quality legal representation from the beginning of their dealings with the criminal justice system.

Grace Warren is the co-director and family organizer for the National Parent Caucus, a group of parents and family members dedicated to keeping youth under the age of 18 out of the adult criminal system. She became involved in this public awareness campaign in 2004 when her 17-year-old son was convicted and sentenced as an adult. Previously, she worked with the Tamms Year Ten Campaign and the Illinois Coalition for Fair Sentencing of Children at Northwestern University. She currently volunteers with the John Howard Association of Illinois, monitoring juvenile and adult facilities, and she recently provided testimony to the Federal Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice on the importance of family engagement by juvenile and criminal justice systems.

In this time of shrinking state budgets, it is important to recognize efforts to improve outcomes for our youth and communities which also utilize our state resources more effectively. With the recent juvenile justice reforms in Illinois and the hard work of two dedicated leaders in this field, Illinois is well on track to succeeding in these goals. I commend this progress, and I will continue to wholeheartedly support these efforts through my work in the U.S. Senate.

#### OBJECTION TO FCC NOMINATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Jessica Rosenworcel and Ajit Pai to be commissioners on the Federal Communications Commission.

I will object to proceeding to the nomination because the FCC continues to stonewall a document request I submitted to the FCC over 6 months ago on April 27, 2011, regarding their actions related to LightSquared and Harbinger Capital. Since then, I have repeated my request to the FCC through letters I sent on July 5 and September 8 and the FCC continues to deny my request for documents.

During the course of my correspondence with the FCC, the FCC has made it clear that it will not voluntarily turn over documents to the 99.6 percent of the Members of Congress and Senators who do not chair a committee with direct jurisdiction over the FCC. As I said in my September 8, 2011, letter their actions are misguided and unsupportable.

It not only sets a dangerous precedent for Federal agency to unilaterally set the rules on how it engages with

Congress it also prevents any meaningful ability for the vast majority of Congress to inform themselves of how an agency works.

Several months ago, I had to take similar action when I supported Senator CHAMBLISS' hold of James Cole's nomination to be Deputy Attorney General in order to get documents from the Department of Justice. In the end, the documents we uncovered shed light on the Department's actions regarding Operation Fast and Furious and the murder of Agent Brian Terry.

I strongly believe that it is critical for Congress to have access to documents in order to conduct vigorous and independent oversight. It is unfortunate that this administration, which has pledged to be the most transparent in history, disagrees. As long as they continue to do so, I will be forced to take steps like this in order to ensure that Congress receives a complete picture of this administration's actions.

#### TRIBUTE TO KRISTEN KELLIHER

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I am taking this opportunity to share with the Senate the extraordinary accomplishment of a young Vermonter. At the age of 17 years, 4 months, and 13 days, Kristen Kelliher became the youngest female to climb the highest peaks in all 48 States in the continental United States. Her journey began in 2002 as she and her family started climbing during family vacations. Soon she progressed to scaling the tops of America's most challenging peaks, including Mount Hood and Mount Rainier. Along the way, she endured injuries and logistical setbacks, but she never let those stop her from reaching her goal. She saved the best for last. Surrounded by 30 family members on a sunny September day, she summited Vermont's Mount Mansfield, in Stowe. She is a dynamic role model to all Vermonters, young and old.

Along with excelling on the hiking trails, Kristen is also an honor student and a three-sport athlete. She plans to graduate early and climb the last two peaks—Hawaii's Mauna Kea, and Alaska's Mount McKinley—next year. Kristen is modest when praised about her achievement and says she only hopes to inspire others to reach goals they once thought unattainable. Vermonters are proud to recognize Kristen Kelliher's strength, skill and stamina, and we congratulate her on this great accomplishment. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article about her achievement, from *The Boston Globe*.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the *Boston Globe*, Oct. 14, 2011]  
CLIMBING INTO THE RECORD BOOK  
(By Josephe P. Kahn)

NORWICH, VT.—On a warm, sunny afternoon last month, Kristen Kelliher hiked to the top of Mount Mansfield, the highest

point in her home state of Vermont. Accompanied by 30 family members and friends, she was greeted at the summit by a banner celebrating her achievement, one that landed Kelliher in the record books.

That day, at age 17 years, 4 months, and 13 days, she became the youngest female to “highpoint”—stand atop the highest peak—in all 48 states in the continental United States.

Climbing Mount Mansfield, all 4,393 feet of it, was a piece of cake, though, compared with what Kelliher accomplished this year. Beginning in June, she conquered three peaks that rank among America's most challenging: Oregon's Mount Hood, Montana's Granite Peak, and Washington's Mount Rainier, whose imposing height (14,410 feet) and treacherous weather conditions make any ascent risky.

The previous female record holder, Danielle Birrer, was 18 years, 4 days old when she set the record in 2000. In all, only 404 climbers of any age or gender have achieved the 48-state feat, according to the Highpointers Club, a Colorado organization that compiles such statistics.

In the meantime, Kelliher has set her sights on Hawaii and Alaska—and an even more exclusive club, the 50-staters. Of its 214 members, fewer than 15 are female.

“I've wanted to do this since I was 9,” Kelliher said in an interview at the high school she attends across the Vermont border in Hanover, N.H., where she is in her senior year. A three-sport athlete and honors student, Kelliher was preparing to play in a varsity field hockey game.

Inspired by an article about a record-setting 12-year-old male highpointer, Kelliher, who has been hiking and skiing all her life, decided to try for the girls' record at an age when many girls might consider hiking more of a chore than a challenge.

“I'm kind of competitive. OK, a lot,” Kelliher said, breaking into smile. “It sounded like a cool goal. I thought, I could do that, too.”

Her climb into the record books has not been uneventful, uninterrupted, inexpensive, or worry-free, however, particularly on her family's part.

Conquering Rainier in July took three attempts, each with its own challenges. Her first expedition—accompanied by her stepfather, Bill Bender, a solar-energy company owner, and led by a professional guide team—ended in disappointment. After returning to base camp, Kelliher learned that while her group had technically “summitted,” they had stopped short of reaching Rainier's actual highpoint, because of bad weather. The mountain's true highpoint, known as Columbia Crest, was a 40-minute round trip from where her party turned around, even though the group received papers certifying that they had summited.

It took two more attempts, each costing several hundred dollars in guide fees and equipment rentals, for Kelliher to cross Washington off her list: number 46, and counting.

“I was so upset,” she recalled of the stomach-sinking moment when she found she had fallen short. “If I am going for a record, I have to get to the top. Technically, nobody would have known. But morally it wasn't quite right.”

Her stepfather says it's in her nature to persevere where others might not.

“Mentally as well as physically, Kristen's very tough,” he said. Climbing Mount Hood, Kelliher incurred painfully swollen shins that stayed unhealed through her first Rainier climb. “You never heard her complain, though,” Bender said. Instead, Kelliher grew even more determined after other

climbers seemed doubtful she could make it up Rainier, period, potentially forcing them to turn back, too.

What has recently become a celebration of one teen's extraordinary feat is also a family saga, one that has taken Kelliher, her parents, and three siblings to remote corners of America that few seek out, much less scale with backpacks and ice axes.

Their first conquest happened almost by accident, on a 2002 cross-country road trip, when the family hiked up South Dakota's Harney Peak. Highpointing wasn't even in their vocabulary yet.

In 2004, urged on by Kelliher, they began targeting other states more systematically. First came New England (all except Vermont, which she saved for last), then six mid-Atlantic states. An 18-state odyssey in 2005 took them through the Deep South, Midwest, and Southwest. In 2006, they knocked off 11 more states. In most cases, the family—including Kelliher's older brother, Ryan, now 19, and two half-brothers, Billy, 10, and Danny, 7—drove from state to state, camping along the way and hiking together up all but the steepest peaks.

“This trip has taken places we just wouldn't have gone to otherwise,” said her mother, Mary Bender, a pediatrician. Asked whether her daughter's quest to set a record had been their driving force, she nodded and laughed. “Although I will say that if Kristen had set out to see every shopping mall in America, that wouldn't have worked for us.”

Only once, in June 2006, did the family highpoint twice (Illinois and Indiana) in a single day. States like Florida, whose 345-foot highpoint, Britton Hill, is America's lowest, were no challenge at all. Five, including Rhode Island, never rise above 900 feet.

On the other extreme are 11 state highpoints soaring 11,000 feet and higher, many of which are difficult to access. Wyoming's Gannett Peak, for instance, which Kelliher and Bender climbed in August 2010, is reachable only by a 46-mile round trip hike. Lugging backpacks crammed with climbing equipment and camping gear, the two spent six long days getting to the top and back.

Highpoints, said Bill Bender, “are all kind of weird in their own way. You have to be a little eccentric to do this.” He has never calculated the overall cost of their highpointing excursions, which until recently have been budgeted as ordinary family vacations. However, flying to the last few Western states and paying for guides and equipment have nudged their spending into “the many thousands. I'm not sure we want to know the total. Except for the last handful, though, it's been fairly inexpensive.”

Tim Webb, president of the 3,000-member Highpointers Club, says his organization attracts a diverse mix of hikers, wilderness backpackers, and serious mountaineers, each with different objectives.

“We get a broad spectrum, including lots of families who plan vacations around highpointing,” Webb notes. Accumulating even 40 states, for which his club awards a special pin, is “a pretty significant accomplishment,” he adds.

Early on, the Benders were unsure Kelliher would remain interested in pursuing all 48. By 2007, Kelliher having completed 10 trips and 42 highpoints, only two Eastern states, New York and Vermont, were left. Then came a two-year hiatus.

“Kristen was still growing, and she needed to grow into the bigger mountains,” her stepfather recalled.

She began last year taller, stronger, and more resolute than ever. “If I wanted to do this [set the record],” Kelliher said, “I knew I'd have to start moving.”