

TOPGUN, where he served as the operations and executive officer. Many may not know that Admiral Willard was the aerial coordinator for the 1986 movie *Top Gun* and also appeared in it as a flight instructor. Admiral Willard later commanded the famous Screaming Eagles Fighter Squadron operating off of the USS *Carl Vinson*.

In 1992, following his successful completion of nuclear power training, Admiral Willard rejoined the USS *Carl Vinson* as its executive officer. He went on to command the amphibious flagship USS *Tripoli* and the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*. As a flag officer, Admiral Willard twice served on the Joint Staff, was deputy and chief of staff for U.S. Pacific Fleet, commanded Carrier Group Five embarked upon the USS *Kitty Hawk*, and commanded Seventh Fleet in Yokosuka, Japan. In March 2005, Admiral Willard became the 34th Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and in May 2007, he became Commander of the United States Pacific Fleet.

On October 19, 2009, Admiral Willard was appointed as Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. He assumed command when much of our focus was still on the Middle East and North Africa, and rightly so. Conflicts there, however, in no way diminished the importance of the Asia-Pacific, where strategically important events unfolded during Admiral Willard's command. As the United States rebalances its national security strategy and realigns its forces with a greater focus on the Asia-Pacific, Admiral Willard's leadership over the last 2 years has laid a critical foundation for our security and that of our allies, now and in years to come.

Pacific Command is personally resonant with me. Between 1968 and 1972, my father held the position, then known as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command, that Admiral Willard has just relinquished. The running joke between Admiral Willard and me has been that he was living in my father's old house. And so, of all the praise and accolades I could bestow on Admiral Willard for his service to our Nation, the best and most appropriate would be: the command undertaken by my father and other great men has been admirably served by the leadership of Admiral Willard.

Admiral Willard has always paid tribute to his spouse of 38 years Donna, who has been a tireless advocate for the men and women of the commands in which she and her husband have served, and a wonderful ambassador for the United States and the Navy. And so I extend a grateful Nation's thanks to the Willards and their children Jennifer, Bryan, and Mark for their exceptional service, best wishes for the next chapter in their life, and fair winds and following seas.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, for 50 years, the United States Senate Youth Program, USSYP, has selected 2 remarkable high school students from each State, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity program to visit our Nation's capital for an inspiring week-long immersion in the workings of the Federal government and a mirror into public service. The students that participate in the USSYP have gone on to dedicate their lives to our country, including Senator SUSAN COLLINS, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, and former presidential advisor Karl Rove.

Started in 1962 through the adoption of S. Res. 324, this program is as crucial now as it was when it was first created. The USSYP acknowledges our country's need to encourage inspired and proactive youth. It takes a stand against complacency and apathy when it comes to learning, gives students a chance to see firsthand the hard work and dedication of appointed and elected officials, and sustains and heightens their passion for helping others after the program is finished. It also aims to instill a true understanding of the democratic process "and the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world" (S. Res. 324), creating a cadre of young ambassadors who promote representative government in their own communities.

I wish to recognize the partners of the USSYP, most especially the Hearst Foundations, and my Senate colleagues who participated in Washington Week a few weeks ago. I thank the Hearst Foundations for their generous offer to fund this program as long as the Senate keeps it alive. Also, I express my gratitude for nonprofit organizations that are innovatively addressing the deficit of civic knowledge and public responsibility in our Nation's students. For example, iCivics, a project started by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, aims to use video games and other web-based tools to engage students and teach them about our government on all levels, including the importance of participation as a citizen, the power of a vote, the checks and balances of our three branches, and our founding documents. We must continue to remain invested in the knowledge and ideals our future generations bring forth.

The USSYP understands the importance of fostering the genuine interest in public service held by our Nation's youth, and only selects high schoolers to participate who have demonstrated a commitment to their student government or local civic organizations. I hope the USSYP's strong 50 years can serve as a model for similar programs—especially to reach those who may not have the support or resources to define or act on their passion for public service. The USSYP has created an alumni fund to assist delegates, who are enter-

ing college or the work force in a low-paying, public service capacity, by providing scholarships. This great first step provides support to our young constituents who are striving to realize their dreams, but are worried about the costs involved.

I enjoyed meeting with the Connecticut delegates during the annual Senate reception during Washington Week and appreciated our thoughtful dialogue. Their visit has left me inspired and hopeful about our country's future.

I know my colleagues will join me in recognizing the importance of the United States Senate Youth program for the next 50 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

JACKSON'S SUGAR HOUSE AND VEGETABLE STAND

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, each year as winter makes way for spring, across my home state of Maine you will see maple trees lined with metal buckets poised to collect delectable maple syrup. Maine is the third largest producer of maple syrup in America, and last year experienced a 14 percent increase, generating a remarkable 360,000 gallons. As maple sugar season commences and Maine looks forward to celebrating the time-honored Maple Sugar Sunday, I rise to commend Jackson's Sugar House & Vegetable Stand located in Oxford, ME.

Often times a small request sparks a marvelous business enterprise. For Roger Jackson, owner of Jackson's Sugar House & Vegetable Stand, his passion for maple syrup was reignited a few years ago when his granddaughter sought help for a school project on how to make the sweet liquid. Although Roger had been producing maple syrup on and off since he was 6 years old, his granddaughter's question renewed his love for this New England staple. And the results have been incredibly sweet.

As a veteran in maple syrup production, Roger is familiar with the trials and tribulations that go along with this endeavor. While it is often hard to turn a profit as a small producer, the smiles on his customers' faces truly make it all worthwhile. Further, compared to when Roger was a child, improvements in technology have certainly enhanced and eased the process of turning sap into maple sugar. For example, today Jackson's Sugar House uses a stainless steel evaporator—equipment that enables them to easily remove water and ensure better control over the quality of their product. This evaporation process is a vast improvement over Roger's childhood maple making experiences involving boiling sap over an open flame.

Roger's expertise in maple syrup has certainly not gone unnoticed. He was recently appointed by the Maine Department of Agriculture Commissioner, Walter Whitcomb, to the Maine