

their fellow servicemembers and for all Americans. They serve in the hope that these daily sacrifices will ensure a safer and more prosperous United States. Their actions are not in vain nor forgotten, and members of our armed services are continually in our thoughts and prayers.

Airmen fighting these fires are necessarily exposed to dangerous conditions in order for firefighters on the ground to have the chance to contain these wildfires. The importance of these domestic actions by the Air National Guard cannot be overstated. They are fighting to save our homes, our businesses, and our communities from devastating fires, often flying in very dangerous terrain.

The names of the fallen airmen will be added to a memorial at the unit's headquarters and their service likewise praised. Great Americans such as these continue to answer the call whenever and wherever they are needed. Our hearts go out to the families and friends of Paul, Joseph, Ryan, and Robert, and I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating the lives of these men.

RECOGNIZING J. CARL GANTER AND CIRCLE OF BLUE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I extend a hearty congratulations to J. Carl Ganter, director and founder of Circle of Blue in Traverse City, MI, on receiving the 2012 Rockefeller Foundation Innovation Award. Innovation and collaboration are two components critical to solving the challenges we face as a State and as a nation. Organizations like Circle of Blue are leading the charge, helping to inform our discussions and to guide us on a path toward lasting, comprehensive solutions.

Circle of Blue has focused its efforts on the global freshwater crisis for more than a decade and has successfully united an international network of leading journalists, scientists, and data experts to shed light on this issue and to illuminate a better path forward. This work has spurred meaningful, dynamic, and workable processes and information that are helping to solve real and pressing problems for communities in need.

Through this effort, Circle of Blue has put forth enlightening reports on the nexus between water, food, and energy. Conducted both in China and the United States, this integrated, cross-cutting work demonstrates that current practices are not only environmentally unsustainable, but can be economically disruptive. In both instances, Circle of Blue has utilized this innovative approach to build broad collaborations and solutions-focused processes that are charting a course toward a brighter future.

There is little doubt we live in a deeply interconnected world, and the fundamental economic, social, and environmental challenges we face are linked. Under Ganter's able leadership,

Circle of Blue has built a breakthrough model of data collection, design, reporting, and convening that places an emphasis on these linkages holistically. By facilitating collaboration between policymakers, scientists, academics, businesses, and the general public, this organization is on the cutting edge of developing processes to creatively implement these solutions. As Mr. Ganter recently stated, "We are listening better. We are becoming more nimble in how we work and collaborate. We are empowering people at all levels with better information to make better decisions."

By discerning emerging trends, highlighting solutions, and facilitating meaningful collaboration, Circle of Blue is a powerful partner in a number of areas. The Rockefeller Foundation Innovation Award is a tremendous honor, one this organization richly deserves. What is most clear to me is that the best has yet to come, and I look forward to the fruits their work will surely bear in the future.

TRIBUTE TO TOM MAHR

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a truly exceptional member of my staff who recently departed after 22 years of service in the Senate. Tom Mahr is one of the longest-serving members of my staff, and he has made invaluable contributions to important debates and the drafting of key pieces of legislation in the Senate over the past 2 decades. He will be missed.

Like many staff members, Tom began his career on Capitol Hill as an intern. I tapped him to join my staff in January 1988 as a legislative correspondent. Tom excelled from the start, and it was not long after that he began a steady path to increasing levels of responsibility. His first major effort as a banking legislative assistant was during the Savings and Loan bailout. He provided me with sound advice, and I was one of only 8 Senators to vote against the bailout.

Tom left briefly to complete graduate school at Princeton; he rejoined my staff in 1991, working on a number of important issues, including what to do to help the economy. When I joined the Finance Committee in 1993, Tom was assigned to work on trade issues. For North Dakota, with its significant agricultural interests, ensuring fair trade agreements and opening new markets for our products was vital. In those days, the rapid rise in imports of wheat and barley from Canada was negatively affecting farmers in North Dakota. Addressing this was a top priority for me, and Tom was a key part of the effort. With his guidance and strategic advice, I was successful in getting the U.S. Trade Representative to negotiate an agreement under which the Canadians agreed not to flood our markets.

In the mid-1990s, Tom took over the health care portfolio in my office.

Health care was an integral part of the major budget battles that took place then, when the Speaker of the House was proposing to slash Medicare spending to pay for tax cuts. Tom was deeply involved and assisted in staffing me on the Chafee-Breaux bipartisan group, which ultimately produced a bipartisan budget proposal in 1996 that garnered 46 votes over the opposition of both leaders. Tom spearheaded Medicare and Medicaid changes, including improvements to rural Medicare programs and securing reimbursement for telehealth services, that became part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. During that time I worked with others to prevent budget legislation from block-granting nutrition programs. Winning that amendment during consideration of the 1996 welfare reform bill was an incredibly important legislative accomplishment, in terms of helping to protect the most vulnerable in our society, a priority that Tom has always had with his work on health and other issues.

In the summer of 1997, I was tasked by Leader Daschle to lead a Democratic Senate task force to develop legislation to implement the proposed tobacco settlement between the State attorneys general and a number of private tobacco plaintiffs. Tom played an integral role in developing that bill and negotiating improvements as it moved through the Senate. That bill was seen as the gold standard for public health and it won key support from the White House.

In 1998, Tom became my legislative director, a position he held until July 6, 2012. I have relied on Tom's advice, counsel, and strategic thinking on so many key initiatives that I have advanced for both North Dakota and the country. You name it, Tom was a part of it. He has been a trusted advisor during key debates from the resolution authorizing the war in Iraq that I voted against to budget and tax issues to Medicare prescription drugs and health reform. And he has led negotiations on many critical bills that I have introduced or played a role in developing.

Tom has proven himself as a strategic thinker when it comes to putting together the farm bill compromises necessary to achieve legislative success in the Senate. He has worked tirelessly with other Senate offices during the critical stages of the last three farm bills to ensure the best possible outcomes for North Dakota, while also addressing the needs and concerns of other States.

On energy, Tom has a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities our Nation faces. He was instrumental in my efforts with the bipartisan energy group, the Gang of 10. It grew to 20, 10 Democrats and 10 Republicans. Through our efforts, we were able to come together on a bipartisan, comprehensive energy package to reduce fuel prices, lessen our dependence on foreign energy, and strengthen our economy. The New Energy Reform Act

legislation produced by the group represented a true compromise, incorporating commonsense ideas, and it was fully offset. Tom could always be counted on to think ahead, anticipate obstacles, and develop solutions that were critical to reaching an agreement.

Tom is one of the smartest people I have ever had working for me, and he has brought that knowledge and his sound judgment to so many successful efforts. He is enormously talented, hard-working, dedicated, and incredibly loyal. And he has earned the greatest respect of other Senators, staff, and many constituents he has worked with through the years.

Tom will be leaving my office to serve as policy director for Minority Whip STENY HOYER in the U.S. House of Representatives. We are fortunate that he will continue using his incredible talent to serve the public good. While I will miss him terribly, I am so pleased that he has chosen to continue in service to Congress and our great Nation.

I am so grateful for the leadership Tom has provided in my office these past 22 years. The country is very fortunate to have someone of his caliber in public service. It is with deepest gratitude for his years of service to me, the State of North Dakota, the Senate, and the Nation that I wish him all the best in the next stage of his career.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL FREDERICK HODGES

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize MG Fredrick (Ben) Hodges for his professional service and dedication to duty as the U.S. Army's Chief of Legislative Liaison over the last year. In this capacity, Major General Hodges was responsible for advising the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and other senior Army leaders on all legislative and congressional matters. During this period of extraordinary change and challenges facing the Army, he masterfully led the Army's outreach to the Congress. Due to the exceptional manner in which he has performed, Major General Hodges has been selected to become the NATO Land Component Command Stand-Up Team Chief in Turkey.

Major General Hodges adeptly understood the importance of fostering a strong and durable relationship with Congress. He now completes his third assignment with the Army's Legislative Liaison, having served for over five years in support of the Congress. He worked tirelessly on behalf of the Army to earn both the trust and confidence of Members of Congress and their staffs. His candor and ready accessibility to Congress ensured comprehensive support for the Army. Major General Hodges handled some of the most complex and sensitive issues faced by the Army in the last decade.

Throughout his career, Major General Hodges has been the consummate soldier's soldier and is known for having an open mind and candor while ad-

ressing the issues affecting the Army today. He is a tremendous advocate for soldiers both within the Pentagon and here on Capitol Hill. His advice, counsel, and friendship have been very valuable to us in the Senate, and he will be sorely missed.

A native of Quincy, FL, Major General Hodges graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in May 1980 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the infantry. Following successful completion of the basic course and Ranger School, he was assigned as a platoon leader and company executive officer in Germany. Upon return to the United States, Major General Hodges commanded infantry units at the company, battalion, and brigade levels in the 101st Airborne Division, AASLT. During his command of the "Bastogne" Brigade, Major General Hodges' leadership was instrumental in the successful invasion of Iraq during the early stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Major General Hodges has also served in a variety of Army staff positions throughout his distinguished career. Ranging from tactics instructor at the Infantry School to senior battalion observer/controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center, he has ensured that our soldiers are properly trained in their war-fighting functions. As a staff officer, Major General Hodges has served as the aide-de-camp to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, chief of staff for the XVIIIth Airborne Corps, and director of the Pakistan/Afghanistan Coordination Cell. Major General Hodges' operational assignments include deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan as the assistant chief of staff, CJ3, Multi National Corps-Iraq and as the deputy commander for Stability, Regional Command South, International Security and Assistance Force, Kandahar, Afghanistan. Throughout the various assignments and deployments, Major General Hodges always accomplished his mission and cared for his soldiers, and took great care of the Army families under his command.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to MG Ben Hodges, to his wife Holly, and to his children Ben and Madeline, for their dedication and service to the Nation. Words cannot characterize properly the extraordinary character of Major General Hodges's accomplishments.

The Nation thanks him and wishes him success and happiness in his next assignment.

TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN PETTERWAY, JR.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the 101st birthday of Mr. John Petterway, Jr., of Shreveport, La. Mr. Petterway turned 101 on June 4, 2012.

Along with celebrating his 101st birthday, Mr. Petterway has also recently celebrated the 99th birthday of

his wife, Alzetta Petterway, and their 70th wedding anniversary.

Mr. Petterway served in the U.S. Army during World War II, from June 1943 to September 1945. He was in the European Command where he served in Africa, Italy, and France. Mr. Petterway was recently honored by the Caddo Parish Commission, in Shreveport, LA, as the parish's oldest living World War II veteran.

After Mr. Petterway completed his service in the U.S. Army, he returned to Shreveport where he and his wife still reside. Long after his military duty and career, Mr. Petterway and his wife have stayed extremely active within their church and community.

It is with a heartfelt sincerity that I ask my colleagues to join me along with Mr. Petterway's family in honoring and celebrating the life of this extraordinary person.

RECOGNIZING NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Nationwide Children's Hospital of Columbus, OH for being ranked seventh in the country on the 2012 US News and World Report's Honor Roll for Children's Hospitals.

Nationwide Children's Hospital earned this distinction after receiving top 50 hospital distinctions in ten different departments. Its gastroenterology, cardiology and heart surgery, pulmonary, and neurology and neurosurgery departments were all ranked on the top ten lists in their respective categories.

Since 1892, Nationwide Children's Hospital has been serving the pediatric needs of millions of young buckeyes across Central Ohio. Children's Hospital provides an invaluable service for many Ohio families every year and continues a unique Ohio tradition of excellence in the healthcare industry.

This well-earned commendation arrives at an appropriate juncture for Children's Hospital as it is about to dedicate a new 2.1 million square feet expansion of its clinical and research departments. This expansion is the largest of its kind in US medical history.

Mr. President, I would like to again congratulate the staff of Nationwide Children's Hospital on this tremendous honor.

RECOGNIZING CINCINNATI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center for being ranked third in the country on the 2012 US News and World Report's Honor Roll for Children's Hospitals.

The hospital began as The Hospital of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1883 and has since transformed into one of the nation's leading pediatric care facilities. Through its outstanding