

But a little poem I learned as a child from my Uncle Jimmy perfectly captures how I feel about the American flag even now:

It's only some stripes of red and white.  
It's only some stars on a field of blue.  
It's only a little cotton flag.  
Does it mean anything to you?  
Oh yes it does,  
For beneath its folds  
Our people are safe at land and sea.  
It stands for a land where God is still king,  
And His truth and His freedoms are free.  
So let us love it well  
And keep it pure as our banner of liberty.

This "little cotton flag" is displayed proudly in our homes, in our schools, in our businesses, over the Capitol and the White House, in parades and ballparks, on the field of battle, and on the graves of the heroes who fought in those battles.

It has flown from the tops of mountains, from the 9/11 rubble of Ground Zero, over the scarred wall of the Pentagon and from the surface of the moon—not once, not twice, but six times.

May our beautiful flag ever wave, and may God ever bless the country for which it stands.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### CONGRATULATING SCOTT BLACKMUN

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, today I would like to congratulate Mr. Scott Blackmun of the U.S. Olympic Committee, USOC, on recently being named Sports Business Journal's 2013 Sports Executive of the Year. Scott has shown real leadership as the chief executive officer of the United States Olympic Committee, a position in which he has served for the past 3 years. He has represented Colorado with distinction on that committee, and he fully deserves this recognition for his work and commitment to international athletic excellence.

Scott has revamped the U.S. Olympic Committee since his appointment in 2010, bringing results both on and off the field of competition. Under his leadership, the USOC has been able to partner with several new sponsors, negotiate a revenue-sharing agreement with the International Olympic Committee, and oversee a U.S. Olympic team that won the most Gold Medals at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Scott also served the USOC capably in multiple previous capacities a decade ago.

A hard worker of high integrity, Scott previously served as chief operating officer of Anschutz Entertainment Group, a major presenter of sports and entertainment events. An accomplished attorney, Scott's skill and work ethic have made him an invaluable asset in the Colorado legal community. I know Scott personally, having worked with him in the past, and I know him to be a diligent yet passionate advocate for clients and causes alike.

It is a privilege to recognize and commend the accomplishments and career of Scott Blackmun. This award is a testament to his commitment to the USOC and to his country. We are proud to be able to say that he is a Coloradoan, and I want to extend my sincere congratulations to Scott, his wife Ann, and their three children.●

##### GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE

• Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, Saturday, June 15, 2013, marks the completion of the Great Allegheny Passage. This 150-mile trail provides an uninterrupted, nonmotorized passageway for travelers to hike or bike from Cumberland, MD, to Pittsburgh, PA. The Great Allegheny Passage connects to the C&O Canal Towpath, which leads from Washington, DC, to Cumberland, MD, creating an uninterrupted route between our Nation's Capital and the Forks of the Ohio.

President Theodore Roosevelt once stated, "Conservation means development as much as it does protection." The Great Allegheny Passage is an excellent example of an area that Americans have worked to conserve in such a way. The development of the passage has greatly improved the trail, while preserving its natural beauty for all to enjoy.

The Great Allegheny Passage is a wonderful place for Americans of all ages to engage in our rich cultural history, enjoy the varied natural history of great river valleys, and experience a range from rural to urban communities.

The Great Allegheny Passage significantly benefits the surrounding communities in many ways. Trails increase the quality of life in a community. The proximity to rivers, trails, and greenways is an important factor when people and businesses are deciding where to live or invest in new properties. Employees who work near such areas will reduce their commuting costs by walking or biking to work.

The Great Allegheny Passage increases tourism to the surrounding areas. Americans realize that using such a trail is an environmentally responsible way to spend their time. The trail attracts people to the area, which greatly benefits the local communities. Trail users create a demand for more lodging, restaurants, and sporting equipment stores. New jobs will be created as entrepreneurs continue to bring tourism and service based businesses to the area.

The Great Allegheny Passage is truly a unique path through a significant corridor. I encourage Pennsylvanians and all Americans to enjoy the natural beauty of America by visiting the Great Allegheny Passage, now, and for years to come.●

##### TRIBUTE TO MIHAELA GHITA

• Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Mihaela Ghita, a

graduating senior at Manchester High School West in Manchester, NH. There is much to celebrate about Mihaela's academic achievements, but one of her most notable accomplishments is that she has never missed a day of school since the day she entered first grade.

Mihaela is an active member of West's school community. She competes in throwing events for the school's track and field team and is also a member of West's gymnastics squad. In addition, Mihaela has gone above and beyond academic requirements by completing an extended learning opportunity, volunteering to read with and tutor the school's special needs students. She is also an active volunteer in the greater Manchester community.

Mihaela's dedication to her education and her commitment to being present to learn every day is truly admirable. As a former public school teacher and parent, I understand and appreciate how unusual and unique it is for a student to attend every day of school for an academic year, but it is truly impressive that she has never missed a day at any point in her studies. The maturity and sense of dedication that Mihaela has demonstrated will serve her well in whatever field she chooses. I am confident that Mihaela will achieve success in her future pursuits.

High school graduation is a special time in a student's life, and I am pleased to rise today to recognize Mihaela's unique attendance accomplishment. However, I would also like to extend my sincerest congratulations to Mihaela and all of her classmates who will be joining her on Saturday, June 15, 2013, for their graduation ceremony. While the students may be heading in different directions, they will always share the common bond of being graduates of Manchester High School West. Once again, I would like to recognize Mihaela Ghita on achieving her exemplary attendance record. I know that her family, her friends, and the entire West community join me in congratulating her and celebrating her many accomplishments.●

##### TRIBUTE TO RALPH MCGARY

• Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I would like to speak today about an individual in my home State—a gentleman from Carlsbad named Ralph McGary. Because as we work for solutions to our Nation's challenges, I hope that we will always remember one basic thing. There are human beings behind these debates. There are stories of struggle and hardship and of inspiration. What we do here in Washington, DC, has real impact on real lives. What happens here matters in profound ways to millions of Americans, matters to fellow citizens like Ralph McGary, who have sacrificed and worked hard, and who depend on a government that will be there for them in return.