

the important role the Veterans of Foreign Wars plays for combat veterans and military servicemembers from the active, Guard, and Reserve forces. This distinguished national group of veterans has been a constant influence, furthering the voice of all of our Nation's heroes. On July 22, 2014, at the 115th National Convention, David Sousa was elected Nevada Department Commander. Commander Sousa has served and held many roles within the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization for the past 10 years and has previously been named the VFW Outstanding Veteran for 2006. His work for the VFW is exemplary, and I expect great things from him as he assumes his role as Nevada's Department Commander.

Commander Sousa's focus of his work for this year is suicide prevention and awareness for veterans, as well as working towards a safer community for veterans. I commend Commander Sousa on this important goal and look forward to working with him to achieve this. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals who serve our Nation but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I am concerned about the needs of Nevada's veterans, especially those suffering one of the most common injuries from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars—post-traumatic stress. I believe Congress has a responsibility to enact policies that will help veterans overcome these difficulties and ensure that the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs have the resources necessary to meet the growing needs of Nevada and our Nation's veteran communities. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

I am both humbled and honored by Commander Sousa's service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Commander Sousa for all of his accomplishments and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S AIR NATIONAL GUARD

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate the Washoe County School District's Air National Guard for receiving the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award.

Former Secretary of Defense, William Perry, developed the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award under the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve office in 1996. Each year, up to 15 awards are presented to employers in three categories: large business, small business, and the public sector. The award honors employers who have shown exceptional support to their Guard and Reserve employees and have gone above and beyond what is feder-

ally mandated to ensure that their military employees are well taken care of. This esteemed award is the highest in a series of Department of Defense employer awards, and I congratulate Washoe County School District's Air National Guard on being selected as one of only 190 employers to receive this award.

Washoe County School District's Air National Guard's extraordinary level of support they provide to their servicemembers is admirable, and I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge Washoe County School District's Air National Guard here today. During deployment, the school district takes the time to send emails and care packages to our brave men and women. Its support services also extend to the members' families. Washoe County teachers volunteer their own time to help children and spouses who are in need of assistance by babysitting, housecleaning, and running errands. The school district has also been commended for the support it showed after a fellow Guardsman and teacher, Michael Landsberry, was killed defending students during a shooting at Sparks Middle School last year.

Each and every day, our troops are serving the United States to protect the freedoms we enjoy today. They dedicate their lives to serve this great Nation and constantly make grave sacrifices to ensure the safety of our country. Our servicemembers and their families deserve our gratitude and thanks, and as a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to keeping our Nation's promise to care for them. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, but Washoe County School District's Air National Guard has shown an unwavering dedication and commitment to ensuring that our servicemembers and their families are getting the support that they deserve.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in congratulating Washoe County School District's Air National Guard and know that they serve as an example for the rest of the Silver State.●

RECOGNIZING VETERAN'S VILLAGE

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Veteran's Village in Las Vegas, NV, for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans with transitional and permanent housing. Veteran's Village is the only 24-hour, 7-day-a-week social service facility for veterans in Las Vegas.

The brave men and women who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom have often come home to a struggling economy. A number of veterans are unable to find a job or afford to buy or rent a home. As the demographics of our Armed Forces have changed throughout the years, so too have the needs of homeless vet-

erans. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, this is an issue I have been personally involved with and have introduced legislation to address. Organizations like the Veteran's Village serve to help those in need in an environment of respect and dignity within the Las Vegas community. This organization is a shining example of the kind of initiatives that will help get our veterans back on their feet.

There is no way to adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, but the Founders and volunteers at the Veteran's Village are working to assist our Nation's veterans by giving them shelter while they try to rebuild their lives. The organization was founded by Dr. Arnold Stalk, who envisioned turning the old Econo Lodge into a facility to house our homeless veterans. With the help of public and private collaborative partnerships, Veteran's Village has created a home environment for our Nation's heroes who need a helping hand. This organization's continued dedication to serving veterans through providing skills training, nutrition, employment training and referrals, continuing education and degree programs, medical services, mental health counseling and much more is commendable, and I am proud to honor this organization here today.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals, but to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans' service organizations like the Veteran's Village are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the Veteran's Village, an organization whose mission is both noble and charitable. I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge the Veteran's Village and its work to end homelessness for veterans throughout the United States, and I wish it the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.●

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAURIUM MANOR INN

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the 25th anniversary of the Laurium Manor Inn in Houghton County, MI, which was celebrated on September 14, 2014. I extend my heartiest congratulations to Dave and Julie Sprenger, who purchased a vacant historic mansion 25 years ago with the intention of opening a bed and breakfast. The Sprenger's vision resulted in a small business success building on the rich history of