

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

VIRGINIA'S COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH EDUCATION INNOVATION

• Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, the key to America's continued success lies in improving our Nation's educational system. With the changing needs of our workforce, it is imperative that we utilize research in STEM fields and the humanities to improve our country's economic prosperity. Even in lean times, Virginia focused on the link between research and the creative new innovations that are leading this Nation's economic recovery; the Commonwealth's continued commitment to bridging these undertakings is commendable.

The Virginia Longitudinal System was created by a partnership between the Virginia Department of Education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College System, and the Virginia Employment Commission. This vital research tool, the first of its kind in the Nation, provides policymakers, researchers, and citizens with information that will prepare and connect Virginians with employment opportunities. Funded with a grant awarded under the stimulus bill—the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009—the data system allows State agencies and researchers to study the behaviors and transitions of students through the public school systems, into college, and on to the workforce so Virginia leaders can make informed decisions and create education and workforce policy based on consistent and relevant data.

Earlier this year, several education organizations, including the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Center for Excellence in Education, Center for Innovative Technology, Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Business Higher Education Council, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, held the Virginia Higher Education Research Summit. The summit focused on the importance of increasing funding for academic research at Virginia's colleges and universities, showcased the strengths of private/public partnerships between Virginia's universities and the private sector, provided a forum for discussing best practices related to intellectual property issues, and strengthened the public's understanding of where Virginia's research dollars come from, including from Federal, State, and private sources.

If we are to win the race for talent, we need a long-term plan that produces the best workforce in the world. I am encouraged by these institutions' open discussion of one of our Nation's most pressing problems—investing in innovative research ideas that will drive our economy and the middle class into the future. I recognize the efforts of these stakeholders and the Common-

wealth as they build on the substantial successes already achieved by Virginia's colleges and universities.●

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK A. SCHRAMEK

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate Lt. Col. Mark A. Schramek on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Air Force after more than 20 years of service. A native of Duluth, MN, he has served our country with distinction both at home and abroad.

An intelligence officer by training, Lieutenant Colonel Schramek has held a number of important operational and headquarters assignments. In 2009, he became a Congressional liaison officer for the U.S. Air Force, a demanding and important position within the Department of Defense. As a Congressional liaison officer, he developed and implemented effective legislative strategies and supported some of the most important programs to the Department of Defense.

Having worked with Lieutenant Colonel Schramek over the past few years, I am pleased to commend him for his distinguished service to our country. I wish him and his family the very best as they begin the next chapter of their lives.●

CONGRATULATING BILL DEIST

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish today to congratulate Bill Deist, of Winnemucca, NV, on his retirement. After serving the community of Humboldt County for over 15 years, Bill will be retiring in December 2014. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate him on his retirement after many years of hard work and dedication to Humboldt County and the Silver State.

Bill stands as a shining example of someone who has devoted their life to the betterment of their community. He started serving the Silver State in 1997 when he moved to Carlin, NV. His experience of over 19 years as the city manager in John Day, OR, made him an extremely qualified candidate to become the Carlin city manager—a position that he held for 2 years. After his years as the city manager, Bill became the Humboldt County administrator, a position that he has held with integrity for the past 15 years.

Upon becoming the Humboldt County administrator, Bill became a person known for getting things done. He always worked well with all city, county, and State governments throughout his career. His consistent priority was to create initiatives geared toward the betterment and improvement of the lives of the Humboldt County citizens. Among his many accomplishments, Bill has been credited with the creation of a strong county budget and upon his retirement, he will be leaving the county debt free and fiscally strong.

While representing Humboldt County for 4 years in the U.S. House of Rep-

resentatives, and now as its U.S. Senator, I have had the distinct pleasure of working closely with Bill on important Northern Nevada priorities. Bill was an integral part of the Pine Forest review and assessment working group that worked for years to develop recommendations that were ultimately included in the Pine Forest Range Recreation Enhancement Act, legislation I have fought to enact as a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. This bill, which would greatly benefit Humboldt County once enacted, has near unanimous support among residents because of the in-depth work done prior to introduction. In fact, it is frequently looked to in Congress as a national model for how public lands bills should be developed at the grassroots level. Public input and local support is critical to all my public lands work in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on behalf of the State, and Bill's input has been vital in nearly every effort I have been involved in benefiting the county.

Bill exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and community service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. I am grateful for his dedication and commitment to the people of Humboldt County and to the State of Nevada. Today, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Bill on his retirement, and I offer my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make the Silver State an even better place. I offer my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

RECOGNIZING DR. NORMAN CHRISTOPHER FRANCIS

• Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and honor Dr. Norman Christopher Francis, who has devoted much of his life to increasing access to, quality of, and affordability of postsecondary education for students. Dr. Francis recently retired from his remarkable tenure as president of Xavier University, a renowned Historically Black University and one of Louisiana's most cherished institutions of higher education. He has left behind an indelible mark of impressive leadership and results. On behalf of the U.S. Senate and the State of Louisiana, I applaud Dr. Francis for his devotion to Louisiana's higher education system and thank him for his many years of service.

Dr. Francis began his journey in the field of higher education country more than 60 years ago as a student at Xavier University and grew into a cherished leader who later served as the university's president for 46 years. This makes him the longest tenured leader of any university in America—quite a remarkable achievement. He is one of the most admired and respected leaders not only in New Orleans and Louisiana but in our Nation today. In an extraordinary career, he took an active and vital leadership role during the tumultuous decades of civil rights battles in