

still five positions requiring Senate confirmation that are occupied by officials serving in an interim or acting capacity. A permanent, Senate-confirmed leadership team is vital to make the significant and necessary changes to the culture of an organization of the size and scope of VA. The bottom line is VA needs permanent, Senate-confirmed leadership in place in order to meet the significant challenges that continue to face the Department. The Senate needs the names of qualified nominees to fill VA's many vacancies.

As the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I congratulate Mr. Shulkin and Ms. Council, and thank them for their willingness to serve the veterans of this great Nation.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE IN CABO VERDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the 40th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence, on July 5th, comes just one day after our country's own Independence Day. As we near Cabo Verde's 40th anniversary, this small country of 500,000 merits our recognition for its longstanding ties to the United States and for serving as a beacon for democracy in Africa.

While the existence of Cabo Verde's islands was first acknowledged by the Romans, it was not until 1456 that the uninhabited islands were rediscovered and settled by Portuguese explorers. Over the next several hundred years, as a colony of the Portuguese Empire, Cabo Verde was a lucrative trading post between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Towards the end of the 18th century, many Cabo Verdeans came to New England, particularly Rhode Island and Massachusetts, where some found success working in the whaling industry. This immigration strengthened the ties between the United States and Cabo Verde and, in 1818, Cabo Verde became the site of the first U.S. consulate in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result of the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, and after centuries of colonial rule, Cabo Verde was able to formally gain independence on July 5, 1975, and soon established diplomatic ties with the United States.

Since that time, Cabo Verde has worked for a democratic government. It has made great strides in this regard and, today, Cabo Verde is a leader in good governance, receiving top marks from the Freedom House for political rights and civil liberties. Cabo Verde has also made significant economic and social progress in the past several years. Additionally, given Cabo Verde's strong ties to the United States and our shared commitment to democracy and economic freedom, Cabo Verde was awarded and successfully undertook a Millennium Challenge Corporation, MCC, compact for private sector, agricultural, and transportation reforms, and is currently implementing a second MCC compact in the areas of water,

sanitation, and land management. Moving forward, Cabo Verde can build on these successes to continue to grow its economy as well as strengthen ties to the United States and other allies.

Rhode Island is fortunate to have one of the two largest Cabo Verdean-American populations in the country, and continues to be enriched by the heritage and contributions of Cabo Verde. I am very pleased that earlier this month, T.F. Green Airport in Rhode Island began welcoming direct flights from Cabo Verde, which will lead to greater exchange and new opportunities between Rhode Island and Cabo Verde.

As we near July 5th, I send my best wishes to all those of Cabo Verdean descent in Rhode Island and throughout the country on the 40th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence.

COMBATTING ANTI-SEMITISM, RACISM AND INTOLERANCE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as our Nation continues to mourn the tragic loss of life at the Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, I wish to discuss international efforts that can assist in addressing the prejudice and discrimination that fuels violence and acts of extremism in our country and abroad.

Following the horrific attacks in Paris and Copenhagen earlier this year, the president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ilkka Kanerva, appointed me to serve as the assembly's first special representative on anti-Semitism, racism, and intolerance. As a Member of Congress, the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, I have long fought to counter prejudice and discrimination and to advance more effective measures against hate crimes. I was therefore extremely honored that President Kanerva entrusted me with this responsibility.

Given the breadth of my mandate, I am focusing my work this year on three areas: first, the urgent issue of anti-Semitism and community security; second, discrimination against Muslims and anti-Muslim backlash; finally, in light of events in our own country and the salience of these struggles for minorities in Europe, discriminatory policing.

As my first initiative, I visited the sites of the Paris and Copenhagen tragedies in April, where I met with people directly affected by the violence as well as government officials and civil society representatives. In my consultations with Jewish, Muslim, African-descent, and other community leaders, we discussed Jewish community security and civil society coalition efforts to combat all forms of prejudice and discrimination. The horrific attacks in those two capitals—simultaneously targeting Jewish communities and expressions of free speech—underscored the urgent need to address security threats to Jewish individuals and

communities. The pervasiveness of anti-Semitism is one of the main reasons I last year called on the OSCE to hold a High Level Conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the seminal OSCE Berlin Conference on Anti-Semitism and adopt a ministerial decision calling on all 57 participating states of the OSCE to implement commitments to combat anti-Semitism. In this vein, I recently led efforts to provide funding for U.S. and European civil society to work with youth to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

Of course, we must be vigilant to ensure that such efforts do not degenerate into anti-Muslim backlash. Measures that are framed in ways that fuel anti-Muslim prejudice will ultimately be counterproductive. Moreover, we need diverse coalitions working together to address the threats we face today. This month, fringe extremist parties from seven different countries formed a block in the EU Parliament. They are now eligible to receive EU money to disseminate toxic views that combine anti-Semitism with anti-Muslim bigotry.

I have also introduced legislation to end racial profiling in the United States. The End Racial Profiling Act, S. 1056, prohibits racial profiling by law enforcement, mandates law enforcement bias training, requires data collection on all police stops, and creates procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving profiling complaints. Tragic events in Baltimore and New York, North Charleston and Ferguson, and elsewhere around the country have shown us that Federal legislation finally ending racial profiling is essential.

It is also essential that we restore confidence between communities and the police, and the criminal justice system at large. To that end, I have also introduced the "Baltimore Act," S. 1610 named after my home city, to provide strategies and resources to strengthen police-community relations and restore justice.

Discriminatory policing is undoubtedly a challenge that many governments face. In some European countries, minorities are 10 times more likely to be stopped by the police than members of the majority. In France—the country with some of Europe's largest Muslim and Black populations—police officers were recently acquitted in connection with the death of two teenagers. That incident 10 years ago sparked riots across France; the acquittal this year has prompted protests and comparisons with Ferguson. In Germany, a human rights group is petitioning the government to end profiling after a Black student was arrested solely because his skin color led them to presume he was in the country illegally. In Slovakia, 10 police officers were acquitted in February of forcing Romani boys to strip and fight each other, even though this notorious incident was captured on cell phone