

and other House Democrats to introduce a bipartisan and bicameral response to the Court's ruling and to restore this vital protection to the Voting Rights Act, and will continue to push for this legislation next year.

Finally, I will remain focused on a number of important criminal justice issues, with sentencing reform legislation as a top priority. As a former prosecutor, I understand that criminals must be held accountable, and that long sentences are sometimes necessary to keep violent criminals off the street and deter those who would commit violent crime. I have come to believe, however, that mandatory minimum sentences do more harm than good. I chaired a hearing on reevaluating the effectiveness of federal mandatory minimum sentences on September 18, 2013, and have been working with both Democrats and Republicans on sentencing reform proposals.

In the coming year, I also plan to reintroduce my forensics reform bill, and will also take up the Second Chance Reauthorization Act, which I was proud to reintroduce earlier this year along with Senator PORTMAN. Since its enactment in 2008, the Second Chance Act has reduced prison costs and improved public safety by giving Federal, State, and local governments additional tools to help inmates more successfully reintegrate into their communities upon release and avoid re-offending. Offenders can escape the cycle of recidivism when they have the job training and skills necessary to successfully reenter society. So far in 2013, the Vermont Department of Corrections has received over \$800,000 to implement a two-phase adult reentry demonstration program and a comprehensive statewide adult recidivism reeducation planning program. The reauthorization bill improves and consolidates the programs authorized by the Second Chance Act and reauthorizes the bill through 2018. The reauthorization bill improves and consolidates the programs authorized by the Second Chance Act, and reauthorizes the bill through 2018.

There are far too many young Vermonters who do not have a roof over their head each night. While organizations like the Spectrum Youth and Family Services and the Vermont Coalition for Runaway and Homeless Youth do their best to provide emergency shelter, services, and housing for youth who are homeless or marginally housed, the need far outweighs their capacity. Next year I plan to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, RHYA, which expired at the end of September. RHYA funds outreach services and helps provide shelter for children and young adults who find themselves homeless. I look forward to reauthorizing and improving vital RHYA grant programs to help children in our most vulnerable

communities. This reauthorization will also bolster training and resources to ensure our grantees are well equipped to meet the needs of young victims.

In addition to our legislative work, the Judiciary Committee will also continue its work to consider judicial and executive nominations. During this past year, unfortunately, the same obstruction that plagued the Senate during the first-term of the Obama administration continued to delay the rate of confirmations to appointments on the Federal bench and the Executive Branch.

The 113th Congress began with a high level of vacancies on the Federal judiciary. As of January 2013, there were 77 vacancies in the Federal judiciary, and of these, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts determined 27 to be "judicial emergencies." Over 2013, the number of vacancies steadily climbed to around 90. While we were able to confirm a total of 46 judicial nominees this year, including 11 circuit court and 31 district court nominees, we were unable to keep pace with new vacancies. By December of this year, there were a total of 88 judicial vacancies, 35 of which are judicial emergency vacancies. In stark contrast, at the end of the fifth year of the Bush administration, there were only 49 judicial vacancies, including 16 judicial emergency vacancies.

This year, the Senate voted to confirm two high-level nominees to key law enforcement positions at the U.S. Department of Justice: James Comey, Jr. to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and B. Todd Jones to be the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. It was unfortunate that the majority leader was required to file cloture on both of these nominations before we could get to a confirmation vote. In stark contrast with the treatment of previous FBI Director nominees, who were all confirmed by the full Senate within a day or two of being reported by the Judiciary Committee, James Comey is the first FBI Director nominee in Senate history to be filibustered. He was ultimately confirmed overwhelmingly by a vote of 93 to 1. Two days later, the Senate confirmed B. Todd Jones by a vote of 53 to 42, making him the first confirmed head of the ATF since that position became Senate-confirmable in 2006.

The consideration of nominations is one of the most important functions of the Judiciary Committee. I am hopeful that we will not see the same sort of obstructionism and dilatory tactics that we encountered during 2013.

In the coming year, we must redouble our efforts to work past our differences to find bipartisan, commonsense solutions to our Nation's problems; I know that that is what Vermonters expect of me. We have seen so far in this Congress an unprecedented level of grid-

lock, partisanship, and political brinksmanship, which culminated in a costly and unnecessary Republican government shutdown in October. We can and must do better, and I hope that we can put the obstructionism of this past year behind us. The American people expect and deserve better. We owe it to our constituents to work together to pass commonsense bipartisan compromise legislation, and we have already seen that we can do just that. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to build upon the progress we have made and find meaningful solutions to the many challenges we face as a country.

VERMONT'S GRANITE INDUSTRY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to talk about a unique Vermont asset that recently gained national attention: the granite industry. Due largely to its versatility, high quality and immense quantity, granite proved integral to the early economic development of my home State and continues to play a vital role today.

The people of Barre, VT, have been mining granite since the 1800s, when it was learned that the unusually high quality of the stone found in the town's hillsides was in high demand. This discovery had local and global implications. Granite from the Rock of Ages quarry in Barre was supplied to help construct columns in the Vermont State House that still stand today. Additionally, the art of stone carving that the granite industry created attracted skilled immigrants to Vermont from throughout Europe and Canada. In fact, both my grandfathers were stone carvers in Vermont.

With its museum, tours, and even a sandblasting experience, the Rock of Ages quarry has expanded its offerings to serve as an educational and historical site, attracting visitors from around the world. Recently, the Timberland Boot Company visited the quarry for a photo shoot. They became so enamored by the community and its people that they ended up highlighting the area in a new line of footwear, noting that it was influenced by "a 150-year-old granite industry that transformed the tiny New England town into an international destination for commerce and art."

I am very proud of the people of Barre for embracing and preserving the important history and culture the granite industry brought to Vermont. The recognition that the Timberland Boot Company gave to Rock of Ages is well deserved.

I ask that an article printed in The Barre-Montpelier Times Argus on November 26, 2013, "Marketers find Barre history just the right fit," be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus, Nov. 26, 2013]

MARKETERS FIND BARRE HISTORY JUST THE RIGHT FIT

If you don't think the local granite industry has a story still worth telling, try selling that to the folks at The Timberland Boot Co., who turned what was supposed to be a routine photo shoot at Rock of Ages last year into a multimedia campaign that is very Barre.

"It's pretty impressive," Rock of Ages spokeswoman Amanda Pittsley said of the newly launched digital campaign for Timberland's high-end heritage collection.

"Originally, they were just looking for a rugged place to go with their new line of boots," Pittsley recalled. "They were just hoping to use a panoramic of the top of the quarry as an intro to this 'mine' of products as far as their industrial boot."

The photo shoot a year ago turned Quarry Hill into boot hill for a day and a half.

"We literally spent all day carrying around boots," she recalled of Rock of Ages' attempt to accommodate a photographer and a creative director interested in making the most out of a texture-rich setting that includes everything from the frequently photographed quarry with its towering derricks to rough-cut granite blocks and weathered railroad tracks.

"They wanted different textures to show behind the boots," she said. "We were just going to be the granite backdrop."

Or so Pittsley thought until she recently visited <http://abington.timberland.com> and learned the photo shoot had "morphed into an entire product line" that makes up Timberland's latest Abington Collection—a nod to the company's first incarnation as The Abington Shoe Co.

"The Abington Fall '13 Collection was influenced by the people of Barre, Vt., and a 150 year old granite industry that transformed the tiny New England town into an international destination for commerce and art."

So says the slick website, which announces a product line that features several styles of boots and a shoe "designed with the Italian sculptor in mind."

The site features a collection of historic Barre photographs to go along with the marketing shots that were taken last year, a couple of timelines, and a few video cameos featuring Italian-born granite sculptor Giuliano Cecchinelli.

"Shop the collection that Barre inspired," it concludes.

Pittsley was impressed.

"You would have thought we went to them," she said.

According to Pittsley, it isn't unusual for Rock of Ages to field photo requests from fashion editors and companies like Lenovo interested in using the quarry as a backdrop, but the company rarely gets to see the end result.

"We're just a site," she said.

Pittsley said she never imagined the sort of spread Timberland came up with when the photographer and creative director headed into Barre to see what they might find at the Vermont Granite Museum and the Vermont History Center.

What they found, Pittsley surmised, was a story ready to be told.

"I think they were just overwhelmed with how much information there was," she said.

Though they can be purchased online, the boots said to be inspired by the people and the industry that put Barre on the map are available at only two Vermont locations, according to the website: Maven on Cherry Street in Burlington and Manchester Footwear on Main Street in Manchester.

DETROIT DIESEL

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, 2013 marks a significant milestone for a dynamic company based in Detroit, MI. It is the 75th anniversary of the founding of Detroit Diesel. Detroit enjoys a rich automotive heritage and has been a hub of innovation and manufacturing for generations. Many companies throughout the State have contributed to this impressive legacy. One of those companies is Detroit Diesel, and I am proud to recognize this innovative company here today.

Founded in 1938, Detroit Diesel has emerged as a leader in the heavy-truck engine industry and an important contributor to Michigan's economy. What began as a company focused on producing engines for the Allied Forces in World War II has expanded through the years to include an array of products used in a number of sectors. Detroit Diesel has a well-earned reputation for quality, has championed a number of technological breakthroughs in the manufacturing industry and is a committed community partner. These accomplishments are a tribute to the many hard-working people that make their success possible year after year. And I have witnessed firsthand some of the cutting edge technologies Detroit Diesel has pioneered.

Demand Performance is Detroit Diesel's hallmark, and they have achieved this in their product development and in the community. With a workforce of more than 2,000 in the city of Detroit, Detroit Diesel is a wonderful example of what is possible through cooperation and economic opportunities. This is evident in the announcement last fall of a \$120 million capital investment by Detroit Diesel. This investment brings greater hope and new possibilities for the company and the city. It is also evident in their commitment to the community through their many charitable activities focused on helping families, protecting and improving the environment, and assisting various educational endeavors.

During its 75 years of existence, Detroit Diesel has made a significant contribution to Michigan's economy. As a lifelong Detroit resident, I am keenly aware of how business development helps to create and sustain jobs, to stabilize neighborhoods and to build the middle class. I commend Detroit Diesel for their entrepreneurial spirit and for their high quality products. I wish them the best as they continue to forge ahead, create jobs and innovate.

NATIONAL PEDIATRIC RESEARCH NETWORK ACT

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I wish to celebrate the passage of the National Pediatric Research Network Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that was signed into law last month.

I wish to thank my colleague, Senator SHERROD BROWN, for his leadership on this issue. I was pleased to work with him on this important initiative in the previous two Congresses.

The National Pediatric Research Network Act expands and enhances our Nation's commitment to pediatric research by providing the infrastructure that is needed to advance the field for decades to come. To do so, the law includes training and support for early-career investigators and authorizes the National Institutes of Health to select a number of competitive pediatric research consortia. Each consortium, comprised of multiple institutions, will focus on specific, high-impact pediatric research, including basic, translational, and clinical investigations.

In addition, the law specifically states that a subset of the consortia must focus primarily on pediatric rare diseases. Participating institutions are encouraged to coordinate with multi-site clinical trials of pediatric patient populations. This will provide needed support for the families of children suffering from rare diseases, such as Duchenne muscular dystrophy, the most common fatal genetic disorder diagnosed in childhood, and spinal muscular atrophy, the leading genetic killer of children under the age of 2.

The National Pediatric Research Network Act's collaborative approach allows us to rethink and improve the way pediatric research is conducted. Shared resources among pediatric institutions help maximize the government's return on investment and avoid duplication. Rather than allocating additional funds at the taxpayers' expense, the law seeks to accelerate treatments for pediatric diseases by emphasizing collaboration and the efficient use of limited Federal resources.

I wish to thank the many families and organizations in Mississippi and across the country that helped build the bipartisan support necessary for passage of this bill, including Children's Healthcare of Mississippi, FightSMA, Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy, the Coalition for Pediatric Medical Research, Children's Hospital Association, National Organization for Rare Disorders, National Down Syndrome Society, the Federation of Pediatric Organizations, and the Kakkis EveryLife Foundation.

Simply put, this law will result in an improved and coordinated NIH pediatric research investment. This effort will help children across our Nation overcome numerous devastating diseases and conditions. I look forward to