

time staffer and public servant who will be retiring next Friday.

August 5 will be Dave Johnson's last day as a Republican staffer on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. It will also be the end of a 23-year career in public service—most of that right here on this committee.

Dave has served me as ranking member since March. He previously served as both the chief Republican counsel and deputy staff director of this committee. His service includes working for Chairman LUGAR from 1987 to 1991 and again from 1994 to 2003. He then served Chairman COCHRAN from 2003 to 2005 and Chairman CHAMBLISS from 2005 to 2007. And from 2007 to 2008 he served then-Secretary of Agriculture MIKE JOHANNIS as a deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He then moved to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission where he served until we convinced him to come back and help us get up and running this past spring.

Dave's record speaks for itself. But I am not sure some understand just how valuable his service has been to this Committee and agriculture and nutrition policy.

As those who know Dave can tell you, his first love has been nutrition policy. He has worked on numerous child nutrition bills and the nutrition title of no less than four farm bills, by my count. I also know that if you sit down and visit with him, he'd probably tell you that one of his proudest moments was the work he did on the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.

Dave has always been a straight shooter. He gives you the answers you need to hear. But one of his greatest strengths is reminding you of the things you haven't considered and need to think about. He has been a tremendous mentor to young staff on both sides of the aisle and he was often the first stop many of them made when looking for advice on how to learn the ropes of the committee.

Finally, Dave's attention to detail and proofing proposed legislation is legendary. If you are scrubbing a bill and making sure it is done right, his is the set of eyes you want on it. A member of my staff was once told by a former member of the Senate Parliamentarian's office that a farm bill Dave had helped write and scrub was "among the best written bills we've ever seen come through the Senate."

That pretty much sums up Dave's service to this committee. Dave, as a former bucket-toter myself, thank you for your years of service to our country, the Senate, the members of this Committee and our constituents. You have been a true public servant and we all wish you only the best as you head home to Indiana.

Job well done.

THE READY SCHOOLS ACT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, August marks the start of a new school

year for more than 1.8 million students in Ohio. It is a time of excitement and nervousness as students prepare for challenging classes, different classmates, and new teachers.

As the summer winds down, high school students are cramming in the summer reading that they pushed off in favor of a bike ride with friends or a game of baseball. Middle school students are crossing their fingers in hopes that their best friend from the last school year is in their class this year. And soon-to-be kindergarteners are practicing their numbers and letters in preparation of their first day of elementary school.

Student readiness for kindergarten is generally defined by the Ohio School Readiness Initiative as a child who has age-appropriate cognitive and social skills and a healthy mind and body. Student readiness can be fostered through a child's participation in high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs like Head Start. These programs are important because if a child is not prepared for elementary school, they are more likely to fall behind their better-prepared peers and remain behind as they progress through school.

However, it is equally important that schools are prepared to accept and support all students as they arrive at the schoolhouse door. Student readiness also means school readiness.

That is why I am introducing The Ready Schools Act of 2011 with my colleague Senator KAY R. HAGAN of North Carolina. This legislation incorporates the recommendations of a report conducted by the congressionally commissioned National Education Goals Panel, which states that elementary "school readiness" involves not only preparing each child for school, but also preparing schools to support each child's learning and development needs.

The Ready Schools Act of 2011 would require title 1 eligible Local Educational Agencies to work with their elementary schools to develop a ready-school needs review. This review would focus on ways an elementary school can develop policies that would create a positive school environment. It would help teachers provide students with developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculums. Finally, it would empower collaboration with early childhood education providers in the school attendance area to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to elementary school.

In my State of Ohio, the SPARK Ohio partnership has led the way in an effort to make every school a "ready" school. Through a strong partnership comprised of the Sisters of Charity, the Ohio Department of Education, the WK Kellogg Foundation and others, SPARK Ohio has helped developed a "ready" school needs review that is now a national model. I am proud of these efforts, and the hard work of the students, administrators, teachers, and

families that have ensured the success of the more than 40 "ready" schools in Ohio.

The Ready Schools Act is about more than making our schools the best they can be. It is about making Ohio, and all States in the Nation, the best they can be. By strengthening the alignment and delivery of early education, our youngest students can continue on a path of academic and life achievement. Research shows that third-grade reading skills can serve as an indicator of whether or not a student will graduate from high school. And not only is school readiness an educational imperative, it is an economic one as well. High school students dropping out from the class of 2010 alone will cause the State of Ohio over \$10 billion in lower lifetime earnings, higher health care costs, and crime related costs.

The building blocks critical to a lifetime of learning are laid during the elementary school years. This is why I am proud to introduce the Ready Schools Act. It will not only improve our system of education but will ultimately lead to a stronger nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO HAL DAVID

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the 90th birthday of Hal David, a wonderful lyricist who has entertained the world with his delightful songs for more than half a century.

Born in Brooklyn, Hal David developed a talent for music at an early age while studying violin and playing in bands. His first hit record came in 1949 with "The Four Winds and the Seven Seas" by Vic Damone. During the 1950s, David began his legendary collaboration with composer Burt Bacharach, and the two created hit songs such as "Walk on By," "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," "The Look of Love," and "What the World Needs Now Is Love." Hal's talents earned him four Academy Award nominations, including an Oscar for "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" from the film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid"; and an induction into the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Hal David has also fought to protect and promote other songwriters. As president of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, ASCAP, he worked tirelessly to protect the intellectual property rights of musicians. As chairman & CEO of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, he helped create the Songwriters Hall of Fame Gallery at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles.

Hal David's extraordinary songs will continue to touch the lives and hearts of future generations. I invite all of my colleagues to join me in honoring Hal David as he celebrates his 90th birthday. ●