

the years. Dr. Meza's leadership as the Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System will be missed; however, I have full faith and trust that he will continue to lead in improving the educational prospects and outcomes for Louisiana's students in whatever role he pursues next. Once again, I am privileged and honored to formally recognize Dr. James Meza, Jr. for his commitment and efforts to strengthen public education in Louisiana.

140TH ANNIVERSARY OF A.O. SMITH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate A.O. Smith Corporation, a "Made in Wisconsin" company on the occasion of their 140th anniversary.

A.O. Smith was founded in 1874 in Milwaukee, WI, and over the past century has grown rapidly from a small family business specializing in the fabrication of metal hardware specialties to a global water technology manufacturer producing residential and commercial water heaters, boilers, and water purification equipment. Today they employ more than 10,000 people across the United States and the world.

The company was instrumental in helping to usher in the automobile revolution, developing a new, lightweight steel car frame a development that caught the interest of major car companies including Peerless, Cadillac, Packard, Oldsmobile, and Ford. Ford's initial order of 10,000 frames led A.O. Smith to develop the world's first mass production process for assembling frames, later introducing the world's first automated frame production line. This first fully automated frame assembly plant came to be known as the "mechanical marvel" due to the line's ability to make a frame every eight seconds—10,000 frames a day.

Their engineers discovered an improved method for welding, allowing for the production of a wide range of steel products. This included the pressure vessel for oil refining and large diameter steel pipe, important components in the oil and natural gas industries.

One of the company's most important and enduring innovations was the process of fusing glass to steel. By perfecting this process, the company developed a range of new products, including glass-lined beer kegs, glass-lined brewery tanks, and glass-lined residential water heaters. Glass-lined water heaters rapidly became an industry standard that endures today and led to A.O. Smith's growth as a global company and as an important economic driver for Southeastern Wisconsin.

In recent years, A.O. Smith has emerged as a vital player in global water technologies, developing solutions to our water challenges. A co-founding member of The Water Council, A.O. Smith has helped ensure Mil-

waukee's place as a world water leader, while supporting economic development in Wisconsin. The Water Council helped bring about the creation of the Global Water Center, which houses water-related business accelerators and research facilities, including A.O. Smith's global water treatment lab, where engineers conduct controlled testing on water purification products sold around the world. Bringing together their work has helped transform Milwaukee into one of the world's most significant hubs for water research, education, and economic development.

I am proud to recognize A.O. Smith as a "Made in Wisconsin" leader, and I share my best wishes with the company and their employees for their continued success.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING JEFF GRAPPONE

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to say a few kind words about my longtime communications director and friend, Jeff Grappone—a native of Concord, NH.

Jeff has served as my chief spokesman since I ran for the Senate in 2010. He's traveled with me from Nashua all the way up to Colebrook, and from Keene to Portsmouth. He was by my side at the Statehouse when I filed my paperwork to become a candidate, and he was there when I won the primary and general elections. Jeff was present for my ceremonial swearing-in that took place in the Old Senate Chamber, and he then immediately got to work establishing my Senate press office.

Jeff helped me hit the ground running as a first-time candidate and as a new Senator. He has provided me with outstanding communications counsel, and I've drawn on his considerable experience here on Capitol Hill as well as back home in New Hampshire. He's been an invaluable adviser as I've gone about my work in the Senate—helping me effectively communicate my legislative priorities in Washington and in the Granite State.

Jeff has worked tirelessly in my office. It wasn't unusual for him to work into the night until the last vote was called in the Senate, and then head up to New Hampshire for a press conference the next morning. He has brought energy and enthusiasm to my staff, and he shares my strong commitment to serving the people of the Granite State.

After nearly a decade in politics and on Capitol Hill—on the legislative staff of Congressman Charles F. Bass, as Press Secretary to Senator John E. Sununu, and as a spokesman for Senator JOHN MCCAIN's presidential campaign, Jeff is about to embark on a new chapter in his career outside of government. As he makes this transition, I will miss his intellect, his expertise, his good humor, and his inherent decency.

Jeff lives by our State's motto, "Live Free or Die," and he has New Hampshire in his blood. He has been a talented and diligent member of my staff, and he's a loyal friend. I wish Jeff the very best always.●

TRIBUTE TO BOB NASH

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor one of New Hampshire's most respected, accomplished, and beloved citizens—Bob Nash—as he enters into his retirement. I am proud to recognize his illustrious professional career, and his continued service to our country and many communities across the Granite State.

Bob attended the Georgia Military Academy before transferring to the University of Florida, where he graduated with a degree in journalism. After college, Bob joined the Army and bravely served our Nation as a helicopter platoon commander in Vietnam. Bob flew 325 missions and was awarded both the Bronze Star and United States Military Air Medal. He eventually earned the rank of Captain.

Following his dedicated service to our country, Bob began a 38-year career in association management, and obtained his Master's in Business Administration and Certified Executive Association certification. In 2001, he became president of the New Hampshire Association of Insurance Agents, NHAIA. Under his leadership, the association received several accolades, including the Bronze Excellence in Education Award, Gold Excellence in Education Awards, the Diamond Excellence in Education Award, and the InsurPAC Eagle Award. The association was also honored with the Innovations in Education, Non-Seminar Education Services, and L.P. McCord Education Award for Excellence. Most noteworthy, in 2011, the NHAIA was awarded the Maurice G. Herndon National Legislative Award—the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a State association.

Bob Nash is an extraordinary Granite Stater whose commitment to others extends beyond his military and professional career. For many years he has been actively involved with the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary International, the Kawanis, and the United Way. I wish Bob and his wife Pat all the best as they enjoy retirement at home in Hillsboro. New Hampshire is fortunate to have such outstanding citizens such as Bob, and I am proud to call him my friend.●

CELEBRATING LANCASTER'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Lancaster, NH, which is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its founding this year. I am proud to join citizens across the Granite State in recognizing this special milestone.

Located along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire's North Country,