

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,

Lancaster is a gateway to the Great North Woods, Weeks State Park and the White Mountain National Forest.

As Coos County's county seat, Lancaster is home to over 3,500 residents. The town welcomes hundreds of visitors from across the region who come each year to enjoy its scenic beauty and vibrant recreational opportunities, including snowmobiling, hiking, and fishing. Shops line the town's bustling Main Street, and every year the annual Lancaster Fair, which is the premier agricultural fair in the region, attracts citizens from across the Granite State and beyond.

New Hampshire's covered bridges are a unique part of our State's beauty, history and charm, and the town of Lancaster is home to two of these classic bridges. The historic Mt. Orne and Mechanic Street bridges span the Connecticut and Israel rivers, respectively.

Throughout its history, Lancaster has also been home to several notable public servants. John Weeks represented New Hampshire in the U.S. Senate, where he sponsored legislation that established the White Mountain National Forest. He also served in President Calvin Coolidge's cabinet as the 48th Secretary of War. Jared W. Williams served in the U.S. House and Senate, and was New Hampshire's 21st governor. Chester Bradley Jordan was elected the 48th Governor of New Hampshire, Irving W. Drew served in the U.S. Senate, and Jacob Benton and Ossain Ray both served in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Lancaster's citizens have contributed much to the life and spirit of the State of New Hampshire. I am delighted to congratulate all Lancaster residents—past and present—as they celebrate this historic occasion.●

MENTORING

● Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I would like to express appreciation to those who volunteer their time to serve as mentors.

A recent New York Times column by Thomas L. Friedman titled, "It Takes a Mentor," discussed the importance of mentors to students and those starting careers. This article highlighted research conducted by the Gallup organization that underscored the significant role mentors can play in helping individuals achieve post-secondary education and career success.

The Gallup research focused on the benefits of mentorships for young adults, but those advantages can also be applied to the academic and athletic mentor programs available to children in grades K–12.

While policymakers and educational experts address concerns about whether American children will learn the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy, we should not overlook the role that mentors play on an individual basis to inspire K–12 students to set higher goals and achieve more.

Volunteer mentors serve as positive role models who can help build self-esteem and confidence in youth, particularly in at-risk children. The best mentors endeavor to challenge students, enhance their self-confidence, and make them excited about learning.

I appreciate the efforts of organizations such as the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, Tougaloo College and others throughout Mississippi that sponsor a variety of mentorship programs with missions to improve the education and wellness of children in my State. The individuals, college students and professionals who give of their time to be part of mentor programs also have my respect.

Mr. President, as a new school year gets underway in earnest across the Nation, I think it is worthwhile to consider and encourage the benefits and rewards that come with volunteering to serve as a mentor.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of Mr. Friedman's column be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New York Times, Sept. 9, 2014]

IT TAKES A MENTOR

(By Thomas L. Friedman)

With millions of students returning to school—both K–12 and college—this is a good time to review the intriguing results of some research that Gallup did over the past year, exploring the linkages between education and long-term success in the workplace. That is: What are the things that happen at a college or technical school that, more than anything else, produce "engaged" employees on a fulfilling career track? According to Brandon Busted, the executive director of Gallup's education division, two things stand out. Successful students had one or more teachers who were mentors and took a real interest in their aspirations, and they had an internship related to what they were learning in school.

"We think it's a big deal" where we go to college, Busted explained to me. "But we found no difference in terms of type of institution you went to—public, private, selective or not in long-term outcomes. How you got your college education mattered most."

Graduates who told Gallup that they had a professor or professors "who cared about them as a person—or had a mentor who encouraged their goals and dreams and/or had an internship where they applied what they were learning—were twice as likely to be engaged with their work and thriving in their overall well-being," Busted said.

Alas, though, only 22 percent of college grads surveyed said they had such a mentor and 29 percent had an internship where they applied what they were learning. So less than a third were exposed to the things that mattered most.

Gallup's data were compiled from polls of parents of 5th through 12th graders, business leaders and interviews with teachers, superintendents, college presidents, principals, college graduates, Americans ages 18 to 34, and students in grades 5 through 12. All told, "we collected the voices of close to one million Americans in the past year alone," said Busted, who added that he found the results "alarming"—not only because too few students are getting exposed to the most important drivers of workplace engagement, but because there is also a huge disconnect in perceptions of the problem.

Busted said that 96 percent of the college provosts Gallup surveyed believed their schools were successfully preparing young people for the workplace. "When you ask recent college grads in the work force whether they felt prepared, only 14 percent say 'yes,'" he added. And then when you ask business leaders whether they're getting enough college grads with the skills they need, "only 11 percent strongly agree." Concluded Busted: "This is not just a skills gap. It is an understanding gap."

This comes at a time when our country faces creative destruction on steroids thanks to the dynamism of technology and growing evidence that climbing the ladder of job success requires constant learning and relearning. Therefore, the need for schools to have a good grasp of what employers are looking for and for employers to be communicating with schools about those skills is greater than ever.

Some help may be on the way from Washington. Last year, President Obama quietly asked Vice President Joe Biden to oversee an overhaul of the government's education-to-work programs after hearing from one too many employers across the country that, as one White House official put it, "they were having trouble hiring workers for some of their fastest-growing jobs," such as operating sophisticated machine tools or software testing and debugging.

As they dove into the problem, said Byron Auguste, a White House deputy national economic adviser, they found that the success stories shared a lot of the same attributes that Gallup found to be differentiating. In successful programs, said Auguste, "students got as much applied, hands-on experience as possible, whether in a classroom or on a job site. Schools, colleges and training centers had close partnerships with regional employers, industry groups and skilled trade unions to stay up to date on job-relevant skills. And students or working learners got a lot of coaching and guidance to understand how to trace a direct path between their training today and careers tomorrow."

The key now is to scale those insights. The Labor Department has awarded \$1.5 billion in the last three years to more than 700 community colleges to develop employer-validated training programs for new careers like natural gas field work and cybersecurity. Later this month, another \$500 million is set to be awarded as part of a kind of race-to-the-top for whoever can build the best community college-industry group partnership anywhere in the country where new industries are finding gaps in the kind of workers they need.

Employers used to take generalists and train them into specialists for their industry. But fewer employers want to do that today or can afford to in a globally competitive economy, especially when they fear they'll train someone who will then leave for a competitor. So everyone wants employees out of college or technical schools who are as ready to plug and play as possible. That's why government has a role in fostering more and more employer-educator partnerships—this is the new, new thing—which businesses, small and large, can benefit from, as well as all would-be employees.●

IDAHO HOMETOWN HERO MEDAL

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the 2014 recipients of the Idaho Hometown Hero medal in the fourth year of the presentation of this recognition.