

County 4-H Shooting Sports Air Rifle and Air Pistol clubs and is currently raising funds to purchase top-of-the-line air rifles and air pistols in addition to target equipment for the 4-H program.

It is my honor to thank the Rocky Mountain Rifle Club and all of its members and employees for continuing to work towards the responsible education of firearms for young Montanans. The right to keep and bear arms is an issue that is of upmost importance to me and the people of Montana. I am grateful for all of RMRC's hard work to educate Montanans and support our State's strong tradition of responsible firearm ownership.●

#### TRIBUTE TO JULIO N. INFUESTA

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to speak today in recognition of Mr. Julio N. Infiesta of Lynbrook, NY, who served in the Social Security Administration for 42 years in the New York region. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Infiesta for his years of dedication and public service and to congratulate him on his retirement.

In 1973, Julio began his career with the Social Security Administration, serving in various local offices in the New York metropolitan region, including in the South Bronx, where he was an operations supervisor, and in Long Beach, where he was selected as branch manager. In 1976, he became a social insurance specialist in the New York regional office in field operations. Mr. Infiesta also served as assistant district manager and district manager in the Jamaica and Flushing offices until 2001, when he entered the agency's Advanced Leadership Program. Mr. Infiesta was promoted to the position of deputy assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support and also served as the acting assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support. As a member of the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program, he served as an area director and as the director for disability in the office of the deputy commissioner for operations. In 2003, Mr. Infiesta was selected as the region's assistant regional commissioner for management and operations support and was elevated to deputy regional commissioner in 2014.

As Social Security's second senior ranking official in the New York metropolitan region, Mr. Infiesta oversaw Social Security operations in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These operations included an annual administrative budget of \$400 million for more than 3,900 employees in 113 field offices, four teleservice centers, four Social Security Card Centers, the Northeastern Program Service Center, and the New York regional office. In the New York metropolitan region, Social Security pays \$7.3 billion in monthly cash bene-

fits to 6 million retirees, workers with disabilities and their families, and the families of workers who have died. Social Security pays an additional \$461 million in monthly Supplemental Security Income cash benefits to 835,000 people aged 65 and older, as well as people who are blind or disabled, regardless of age.

Mr. Infiesta and his wife, Joanne, are longtime residents of Lynbrook, in Nassau County, Long Island.

Mr. President, I ask that we give tribute on December 10, 2015, to the 42 years of service that Mr. Julio N. Infiesta gave to the Social Security Administration and to the people of the United States.●

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT O. KELLEY

● Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, after 7 and a half years of leadership educating the best and brightest minds not only in North Dakota, but from around the world, University of North Dakota, UND, president, Dr. Robert O. Kelley, is retiring. I want to take the time to thank him for his service and send my best wishes to President Kelley, his wife, Marcia, and his family for their commitment to the students, faculty, and families served by the university.

President Kelley joined the University of North Dakota in 2008, serving as the school's 11th president and providing the university, its students, the city of Grand Forks, and the State of North Dakota the steadfast direction needed to strengthen the legacy and leadership of the institution.

As an alumna, the University of North Dakota will always hold a special place in my heart. The University of North Dakota is where I gained knowledge and skills that helped me in both the private and public sectors. So I am proud President Kelley similarly ensured that students continue to receive the skills they need to succeed. Under his steady guidance, the University of North Dakota has grown significantly.

Nearly \$225 million in building projects are underway at the university, including the school of law building addition and renovation and the new school of medicine and health sciences building, which will open in the fall of 2016. Each and every time I return to the campus to visit with students and faculty, I see firsthand the exceptional college experience UND offers. I know these accomplishments are in large part attributed to Dr. Kelley's direction and will be an element of his legacy for years to come.

Since the university's founding in 1883, it has been an academic center for North Dakota, where young minds have had the opportunity to learn and grow to become the leaders of the State and the country. President Kelley's leadership has worked to navigate the university through sometimes controversial reforms including the process to change the school's nick-

name and logo. Under his guidance, the school worked to ensure a smooth transition.

As UND looks to the future, I recognize that President Kelley's work over these last 7 and a half years has strengthened the institution's foundation for excellence and will help those who follow in his stead to maintain the school's legacy. On behalf of the students, families, and citizens of North Dakota, I wish him and his family the best and thank them for their hard work and service to the University of North Dakota and our great State.●

#### RECOGNIZING CARSON TAHOE HEALTH'S REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 10th anniversary of Carson Tahoe Health's, CTH, acclaimed regional medical center.

Over the past decade, this center has grown to be one of northern Nevada's leading health care facilities. Most recently, the Carson Tahoe Sierra Surgery department of the regional medical center received the HealthInsight Hospital Quality Award for its top-tier care and patient satisfaction. The center has been recognized through a variety of accolades for its cutting-edge medical expertise and incredible patient care. I am proud to see this facility in Nevada recognized on a national level for its high-quality medical treatment.

Since the Medical Center's opening, those working within the facility have gone above and beyond to provide northern Nevadans with the best health care. The staff has spent countless hours further expanding health care services for Nevadans. The medical center has developed a premier open heart and endovascular surgery program and a women and children's center with a five-star rating. The facility has also secured an affiliation with the University of Utah Health Care and Huntsman Cancer Institute, which significantly increases care options for Nevadans. The center is acknowledged for its complete cancer treatment, intervention, support, and aftercare and provides 153 beds for Silver State residents. The staff is comprised of 240 board-certified physicians that cover an array of 35 medical specialties. The northern Nevada community is fortunate to have this incredible Medical Center ready to help with its medical needs.

For the past decade, CTH's regional medical center has provided residents across northern Nevada with top-notch and innovative health care options. The hard work of those that have helped grow this facility is greatly appreciated. Today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the regional medical center on its 10th anniversary and in thanking those that work within the facility helping to save lives.●

RECOGNIZING THE SOUTHERN NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America on reaching a significant milestone of 50 years of service in our State. It gives me great pleasure to recognize this entity that does so much for Nevada's veterans, active military members, and their families.

For half a century, the southern Nevada chapter has provided southern Nevada's military community with an incredible support system to address a diverse range of veterans and active military members' issues. The organization offers our Nation's brave men and women advice and guidance on compensation and benefits, as well as raises money to benefit Wounded Warriors, ROTC scholarships, and other entities helping our heroes who have defended our freedoms. The southern Nevada chapter spearheaded the Veterans Court Program, which gives veterans a second chance and helps to expunge misdemeanors from their records, so long as they participate in a rehabilitation program, perform community service, and maintain a positive lifestyle.

Southern Nevada's military community is fortunate to have this chapter working as an ally to improve the lives of veterans. The organization also advocates on behalf of America's national defense, an issue I believe is crucial for our country. I am grateful to each and every member of this organization for their service and sacrifice in defending our Nation. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women who sacrifice their lives for our freedoms. Their service is invaluable to our country.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have had no greater honor than the opportunity to engage with the men and women who served in our Nation's military. I recognize Congress has a responsibility not only to honor the brave individuals who serve our Nation, but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am grateful to have organizations like the southern Nevada chapter working towards a common goal: fighting to ensure the needs of our veterans are met.

Today I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the southern Nevada chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, an organization with a noble and charitable mission. I am humbled and honored to recognize its 50th anniversary, and I wish to thank all of the hard-working members for everything they do.●

REMEMBERING THAIS F. O'DONNELL BLATNIK

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of a dear friend and a remarkable West Virginian who passed away on December 9th, 2015. Former West Virginia State senator and house of delegates member, Thais F. O'Donnell Blatnik, was a dedicated public servant and an inspiring leader who was respected and admired by all who knew her. She led an extraordinary life that will always be remembered in the hearts of the countless individuals whose lives she touched.

Thais was a proud West Virginian from our State's northern panhandle. She was born and raised in the town of Weirton, where she grew up with her loving parents and her two younger sisters, Eileen and Kay. It was there in the small town of Weirton that Thais would plant her roots and cultivate an inherent love and commitment to her community, the northern panhandle region, and her entire State.

Thais went on to live a long and prosperous life, filled with immense success. But she never strayed too far from her loved ones and friends in Weirton and the northern panhandle. After graduating from high school, she attended and graduated from West Liberty University and launched a tireless career in journalism. After college, Thais returned to her beloved hometown to work for the Weirton Daily Times. She also spent part of her career working for the Wheeling Intelligencer and as an editor for the Dominion Post.

During her journalism career, Thais developed her inquisitive nature along with her passion for asking the hard questions. She was a true force, and she was tough but fair when it came to telling the news. She covered all levels of politics, and she even had the opportunity to interview three U.S. Presidents: President Kennedy, President Ford, and President Roosevelt. As a result of her work in journalism, she was emboldened to run for office herself and to stand up for the northern panhandle communities she loved so dearly.

Just as Thais was a fierce journalist, she became an equally strong and passionate public servant. Genuinely committed to improving the lives of all West Virginians, she represented Ohio County for 8 years in the house of delegates and another 8 years in the State senate. I was proud to work alongside her and call her my colleague during my time in the State senate. Thais spent her time at the statehouse fighting to improve the lives of all West Virginians, but specifically women and children and those struggling with mental health and disabilities. She was honored for her great work and for her service as Mental Health Directors Legislator of the Year and recognized by the West Virginia Association for the Developmentally Disabled for her faithful work helping children with exceptionalities. Thais also served as

the executive director of the Wheeling Area Training Center for the Handicapped, WATCH.

Thais was not only reputable and accomplished in her public life, but she was also an unparalleled example of a devoted wife, a proud mother, and a wonderful grandmother. She was married to the late Dr. Albert M. Blatnik for more than 48 years and paid tribute to him in a book she wrote titled "Here's Al." Thais received love and support throughout her life from Al as well as her children—Floyd, Judy, and David—and her grandchildren—Katie, Jack, Joe, Maggie, and Sam—who lovingly called her "Meme." During their lives, Thais and Al led their grandchildren across the country introducing them to exciting new experiences.

Anyone who knew Thais Blatnik can tell you about her incredible passion for her community and her State and her ability to inspire each person she encountered. She made a difference throughout West Virginia and will be forever remembered for her many years of service. She was truly a hero to so many in our State, and though she will be greatly missed, her memory will always live on.●

RECOGNIZING THE HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Henry Ford Health System as it celebrates delivering a century of high-quality and innovative health care services to the metropolitan Detroit community.

In 1909, Henry Ford, David Whitney, and a few other leading Detroit-area businessmen recognized the need for a major health care center in Detroit and set out to open Detroit General Hospital. After experiencing several years of delays, Henry Ford took over the entire project and renamed the facility "Henry Ford Hospital", which opened its doors to the public on October 1, 1915.

From the outset, Henry Ford was focused upon adapting the insights and innovations he pioneered in the automotive industry for use in the delivery of health care services. Among his innovations were a first-in-the-Nation center for treating chemical dependency and an accountability system for promoting shorter patient waiting times. Over the years, Henry Ford Health System's commitment to innovation saw breakthroughs in the administration of electrocardiograms, improvements in the design of hospital beds, and advancements in medication regimens for treating bacterial infections.

Throughout its history, Henry Ford Health System has been committed to meet the evolving needs of the metro Detroit region. Recognizing the need for access to low-cost health care services, Henry Ford Hospital partnered with the State of Michigan in 1970 to