

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS WEEK AND TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am proud to be a steadfast ally of the LGBT community. This week is Transgender Awareness Week, during which we seek to raise the visibility of transgender and gender nonconforming people and to bring awareness to the issues this community faces, from prejudice and discrimination to acts of violence that have claimed too many lives.

Eighteen years ago, Rita Hester, an African-American transgender woman was murdered in Boston, MA. Rita's death ignited fear in the transgender community. Her murder also sparked the founding of the Transgender Day of Remembrance. On November 20, we remember Rita and the all too many transgender individuals who have lost their lives to hate-based violence.

Sadly, the fear that the transgender community feels has not subsided in the last 18 years. For the transgender community, and even more so for transgender women of color, the fear of violence is still all too real. In 2015, at least 21 transgender individuals in the United States were victims of fatal violence. This year, we have already reached that same number of transgender deaths attributable to violence, reflecting more such deaths than in any other year in which advocates have kept records. This is both sad-den and maddening.

Too many of these victims' stories go untold, but through the Transgender Day of Remembrance, many of these individuals silenced by violence get a small voice. This day is a reminder that no person's life is worth less than another's because of who they are or whom they love. We must continue to do all we can to stop the marginalization of the transgender community, to stop the discrimination, and to stop the violence.

In 2009, President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. It was the first Federal law to provide civil rights protections for transgender people, and it was a step in the right direction. But it has not been enough to stop the ongoing discrimination and violence against the transgender community.

We still have work to do and need as many voices as possible convey that message. This week in particular, but every week as well, we must remember all the transgender individuals who have lost their lives to violence at home and abroad and continue to work towards a more inclusive society, free of violence and discrimination.

HONORING MICHAEL G. SAURO

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator JAMES LANKFORD and myself, it is my honor to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Department of Army civilian employee Michael G.

Sauro who died 1 day after his 40th birthday on October 19, 2016, of wounds received from encountering hostile enemy fire near Kabul, Afghanistan.

The son of Michael and Christine Sauro, Mike was born on October 18, 1976 in Chambersburg, PA. He graduated from Savanna High School in Savanna, IL, and went on to graduate with his bachelor's degree from Illinois State University in Normal, IL.

"Whether it be sports, or his friends, or his family, he always went at it 100 percent," recalled a fellow Savanna High School graduate, "He was very committed to the U.S. and service members, making sure they had what they needed to do their job." He was passionate about life and was always willing to step in and help. His infectious smile will be remembered by everyone that knew and loved Mike.

Mike began his Federal civilian service in December of 1999 and spent his career working for the Defense Ammunition Center, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant in McAlester, OK, and at its satellite locations at Fort Riley, KS, and Schofield Barracks, HI.

While at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, he led the effort and was instrumental in revisions of the hazardous materials course. He worked to deliver the most robust training course available at over 50 locations in and outside the continental United States. Mike was the liaison between McAlester Army Ammunition Plant and the satellite training locations helping to ensure that the mission was accomplished. McAlester Army Ammunition Plant coworkers fondly remember him for his "sunny disposition as well as his genuine kindness."

Mission always came first for Mike. Regardless of the complexity of the task, he quickly comprehended requirements of the task and aggressively accomplished them in a professional, timely manner. He deployed three times—the first time in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the second in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and the third to support the mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces. Mike's dedicated service and expertise made a difference around the world and saved lives. He is a testament to the values of the Defense Ammunition Center, the U.S. Army Combined Services Command, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the U.S. Army.

Mike is survived by his parents Michael and Christine Sauro, his brother and sister-in-law Ben and Sarah Sauro, his sister and his brother-in-law Brienne and Lance Matthews, and their children, Dakota and William.

Today we remember Michael G. Sauro, an American hero who gave his all for his country. Our Nation lost a great American, son, grandson, brother, uncle, and friend. Mike's service and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS AHMUTY

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Chris Ahmuty as he retires from the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin after 24 years of advocacy and leadership. Since 1992, Chris has dedicated his professional and personal life to creating a stronger and more equal Wisconsin.

Chris was born in New York City and spent his childhood and adolescent years in Derby, NY. Growing up, Chris's grandfather, Frederic P. Lee, played a significant role in shaping his future. Based in Washington, Frederic was an active contributor to the political reform movement in Montgomery County, MD, throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Frederic's commitment to public service and family values had a tremendous impact on Chris, eventually leading him into a career in advocacy.

Chris's career with the ACLU did not begin with a full time job, but rather a volunteer position. After moving to Milwaukee to attend graduate school, Chris held a variety of jobs, including a position at the Milwaukee County Historical Society. However, following in his grandfather's political footsteps, he began to spend his free time volunteering for the ACLU. Soon after, in 1982, he became the executive assistant to the ACLU Wisconsin executive director, Eunice Edgar.

Founded in 1920, the American Civil Liberties Union continues its mission to preserve individual rights and liberties. Since becoming executive director of the Wisconsin chapter in 1992, Chris has personally embodied this mission both in his work and in the community.

Over the course of his tenure, the Wisconsin chapter has grown from 4 full-time employees to 12, including 2 full-time staff attorneys. According to those who work most closely with him, Chris's leadership style is rooted in his familial values and strong belief in the importance of civil liberties. He recognizes that change will not occur over a single day or week, but over a long period of time with the help of perseverance, patience, and a strong will. Chris is a staunch advocate who has fought to end racial segregation in schools, uphold a woman's right to choose, and preserve every individual's First Amendment rights. Under his leadership, ACLU Wisconsin also fought hard to challenge the State's voter ID laws, which threaten to disenfranchise or discourage Wisconsin voters. Chris has spent his career giving a voice to those who might otherwise not be heard.

Chris's commitment to the people of Wisconsin goes beyond the impact he has had at the ACLU. He has served on advisory committees for the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and on the Legal and Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Relay of Electronic Data, helping develop privacy standards for Wisconsin healthcare. Lastly, Chris has served on the board of the Milwaukee Turners for over 10 years as a way of honoring his German heritage and

helping mold the next generation of leaders.

For the many years I have known Chris, he has been a respected leader, a passionate advocate, and a cherished friend. His patience, character, and drive make him a wonderful ally and a fearless protector of the rights of all Wisconsin residents. Although he is retiring from the ACLU, I know he will continue to spend his days fighting for equality.

I am so pleased to join with others in expressing gratitude for his leadership and recognizing his accomplishments. I wish him and his partner, Bob, all the best in the next chapter of their lives together.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN R. HEIMANN

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary service of the Honorable Stephen R. Heimann, as he retires from the Bartholomew County Circuit Court after 25 years of distinguished service.

Born in Monroeville, in Allen County, IN, he graduated from Wabash College and the Indiana University School of Law and ran a successful private law practice for 10 years.

Since his appointment to the bench in 1991, Judge Heimann has embodied the most dignified ideals of our judiciary, dutifully demanding of himself the same high standards of conduct that he enforces and maintains for the community. The legacy he leaves goes beyond the thousands of orders and decisions he has rendered and extends to the way he treats others.

Judge Heimann's contributions have made a difference in the local community and in legal circles. His involvement has included performing in the local "Dancing with the Stars" competition to raise money for charity, facilitating interfaith Christian and Muslim dialogue, delivering a keynote speech before the NAACP, providing marriage preparation counsel to young couples, and numerous other leadership roles on the boards of nonprofit organizations. He has also served the State's judiciary by chairing its board of law examiners, judicial ethics and professionalism, judicial education, and judges and lawyers assistance program boards.

The Honorable Stephen R. Heimann has served the people of Bartholomew County and State of Indiana with great integrity, honesty, and professionalism. We are incredibly grateful for his leadership and service, and we wish him well in retirement with his wife, Ann, children Andrew and Emily, and granddaughter Nora.

RECOGNIZING BROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF BROWNSBURG, INDIANA

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Brown Elementary School of Brownsburg, IN, for

being named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among students.

Opened in 1997, Brown Elementary School currently serves 680 students. Brown Elementary School prides itself on having a welcoming environment for students and various programs like Learning Lab, which provides students struggling academically with extra support in reading and math in a small group setting.

Brown Elementary School's effectiveness can be found, in part, in its willingness to meet the educational needs of each individual student. The school began implementing the professional learning communities model during the 2011–2012 school year, which allows teachers to work on target areas to improve students' performance, contributing to their academic success. This interactive model allows teachers to share resources and ask questions to ensure the curriculum is being met across grade levels.

Brown Elementary School also benefits from the parent support group, which takes an active part in enhancing student learning and achievement. Through the group, approximately 15 to 40 parent volunteers come to school daily to help support the efforts by teachers and assist with student learning.

I am proud to recognize Brown Elementary School principal Dr. Casey Smitherman, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and the Brownsburg community well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Brown Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING CATHEDRAL HIGH SCHOOL OF INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Cathedral High School of Indianapolis, IN, for being named as a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to

gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among students.

Founded in 1918, Cathedral High School is a Holy Cross School and one of the oldest and largest Catholic high schools in Indiana. It is one of the top-performing schools in the State. Among the school's strengths is its diversity, with students enrolled from more than 160 grade schools, who live in nine central Indiana counties, and come from neighborhoods across Indianapolis.

Cathedral High School provides a faith-based holistic education centered on its mission to "transform a diverse student body to have the competence to see and courage to act." This is evident through the school's rigorous academic program to ensure all students are challenged to their highest ability, and staff, students, and families work together to teach and foster values that develop strong character.

Indicators of Cathedral's academic success are illustrated through the success of its students on Indiana's graduation qualifying exams for math and English. The school saw a 98.3 percent passage rate on Indiana's graduation qualifying exam for math and English. Additionally, 100 percent of Cathedral graduates were accepted to institutions of higher learning.

I am proud to recognize Cathedral High School principal David L. Worland, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and the Indianapolis community well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Cathedral High School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING GEIST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OF FISHERS, INDIANA

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize Geist Elementary School of Fishers, IN, for being named a 2016 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among students.

Geist Elementary School, GES, which was built in 2004, serves approximately 780 students from kindergarten through fourth grade. GES is part of Hamilton Southeastern School District, which now has five National Blue Ribbon schools. GES was recognized, in part, for its exceptional academic program, and it prides itself on providing