

which was established to punish establishments that sell tobacco to individuals under 18 years of age. While I support efforts to curb underage smoking, this amendment sought to impose a new, \$34 million dollar tax on smokers. In light of the tobacco tax increase already adopted in the budget agreement, and considering the penalties expected in the tobacco settlement, I believe Senator HARKIN's additional tax was excessive and I voted to support the 52-48 tabling vote.

The next amendment considered was a Bryan amendment to reduce the amount of funds appropriated to the Market Access Program [MAP]. Identical to the one offered on the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill, the Bryan amendment would have eliminated funding of MAP if the aggregate amount of funds and value of commodities under the program exceeded \$70,000,000. Formerly known as the Market Promotion Program, MAP has provided funding for large, lucrative corporations. I believe the Market Access Program is a clear example of corporate welfare, and I have consistently supported elimination or reduction of this unnecessary government subsidy. I supported Senator BRYAN's amendment which was tabled by a vote of 59-40.

A vote on a Grams amendment to complete a comprehensive economic evaluation of the Northeast Dairy Compact was scheduled to follow the Bryan amendment, but was instead adopted by unanimous consent. The compact allows dairy producers in the Northeast to artificially set minimum prices for dairy products within the region. I have consistently opposed the new bureaucracy established by the Compact and was pleased to be a cosponsor of the Grams amendment.

Following disposition of these three amendments, the 1998 Agriculture appropriations bill was passed, with my support, by a vote of 99-0. I urge the conferees to act quickly to finalize this legislation and once again demonstrate America's commitment to its farmers. ●

HONORING CONNECTICUT'S BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to six elementary schools from my home state of Connecticut whose achievements have earned them the honor of being named blue ribbon schools. The blue ribbon schools program was established in 1982 to honor the best elementary and secondary schools in the country. This program promotes excellence in education by providing national recognition to a diverse group of schools that display an uncommon ability to help their students to reach their potential.

These blue ribbon schools, with their varied socioeconomic, geographic, and educational needs, prove that, with the right tools, all of our schools can be successful. They display the qualities of excellence that are necessary to prepare our young children for the chal-

lenges of the next century. Their formula for success is no secret. Each has strong leadership, a sense of mission, parental involvement, high quality teaching, and high standards and high expectations for each and every student.

It is important that we make every child in this country believe in themselves, and blue ribbon schools are challenging our students to try harder and demand more from themselves.

Of the 76,000 elementary schools across the country, only 263 are honored as blue ribbon schools, and I am proud of the fact that all six nominated schools from Connecticut were chosen to be honored. These six schools from Connecticut are Ellen P. Hubble Elementary School in Bristol, Highland Elementary School in Cheshire, East Farms School in Farmington, the Center School in Litchfield, the Peck Place School in Litchfield, and West District School in Unionville. Each is different and unique, but they hold in common a commitment to helping all their students achieve high standards. I would like to briefly mention some of the unique accomplishments of each of these schools.

Ellen P. Hubble School in Bristol is a center for innovation in education, where learning is fun. The school brings excitement to learning by developing building-wide themes. In the past, the school has been transformed into a farm, a forest, and a circus, and the children have responded by bringing uncommon enthusiasm to their schoolwork. The students of Ellen P. Hubble have also been very active in their community. Through the random acts of kindness and make a difference day program, students have worked on activities ranging from supporting a shelter for battered women to providing help for Bosnian refugees.

Highland Elementary School is a reflection of the town of Cheshire's dedication to provide each young person with a nurturing, motivating, and enjoyable learning environment. Highland Elementary has formed a collaborative intervention team, composed of teachers and administrators, whose role is to identify and address the complex needs of each individual student. The teachers set high standards for their students, but the results have shown that great teaching inspires active learning. In addition, Highland is a member of the national network of Partnership 2000 schools, which fosters home-school partnerships.

The East Farms School in Farmington is centered around the belief that all children are capable of becoming skillful, lifelong learners. The staff works within collaborative teams which develop an engaging interdisciplinary curriculum. East Farms is the first school in Connecticut to establish their own publishing center. For 3 years, parents have assisted children and teachers in the publication of over 1,000 original books each year. This effort has not only brought stu-

dents, parents, and teachers together in a learning exercise, it has also reinforced the value and importance of written work.

At the Center School in Litchfield, lessons are planned around student inquiry, and teachers serve as facilitators rather than lecturers. In addition, students at the Center School are taught that the best way to solve a problem is by cooperating with others, and students are instilled with a strong sense of community. The school has been at the forefront of instructional reform, and the school's thematically arranged, interdisciplinary units of instruction have been hailed as exemplary by local, state, and national educators. The Center School was the first elementary school in Connecticut to be accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and they recently received the Connecticut Award for Excellence.

Teachers are at the center of efforts to provide children with a quality education at the Peck Place School in Orange. This school has invested in highly-qualified staff with 92 percent of the staff holding advanced degrees. Beyond an excellent traditional elementary schools curriculum, Peck Place also offers both French and Spanish to its students. Students and parents are enthusiastic partners in this effort. The Peck Place School proves a strong learning environment leads to improved performance by students. Connecticut mastery test scores have shown significant improvement in every grade, and grade four scores have jumped from 25 percent meeting or exceeding the State goals in 1993 to 74 percent in 1995.

West District School in Unionville is a true neighborhood school where nearly half of the students walk to school every day, and many of them are the children of former students. West District is committed to the belief that all students are capable of learning at a high level if you nurture each student's special strengths. West District has formed a school development council, made up of teachers, staff, and parents, to work on ways to improve the school and to develop priorities for each school year. Last year the school chose to focus its efforts on addressing the needs of low-performing students, and the school worked diligently to bridge the gap between their most successful students and those who struggle with their classwork. The results have been successful as the vast majority of students are now performing at the high levels. West District boasts some of the highest Connecticut Mastery scores in the State, with 84 percent of sixth graders and 80 percent of fourth graders reaching the excellent level on the Connecticut mastery test in math. In addition, 80 percent of sixth graders achieved excellence in reading and 75 percent of fourth graders reached the excellence level in writing.

Once again I would like to congratulate these six schools for being honored

as blue ribbon schools. I believe that they all serve as models for other schools and communities seeking to provide young students with a nurturing environment that will enable each child to develop into a life-long learner. •

TRIBUTE TO CAPT. CARLTON A. SIMMONS, JR., USN (RET.)

• Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise today with the sad mission of reporting the loss of a truly outstanding naval officer, Capt. Carlton A. Simmons, Jr. He passed away on July 14 after a long illness and was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on July 22.

A native of North Dighton, MA, and a 1974 graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Captain Simmons was commissioned an ensign in 1975. Following designation as a naval aviator in 1977 and qualification in the A-7E Corsair, he served with Attack Squadron 22, completing two deployments to the western Pacific.

Followon tours of duty included an exchange assignment with the Air Force, flying F-16 Falcons with the 421st Tactical Fighter Squadron; and duty as flag secretary to the commander, Middle East Force in Manama, Bahrain. Later, after training in the F/A-18 Hornet, he served with Strike Fighter Squadron 113.

A superb leader, the Navy entrusted Captain Simmons with three command assignments—the Strike Fighter Weapons School, Pacific Fleet; Strike Fighter Squadron 25; and the F/A-18 Fleet Readiness Squadron, Strike Fighter Squadron 125. While commanding officer of VFA-125, the squadron earned the Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award for surpassing 70,000 accident-free flight hours; and Personal Excellence Partnership Program awards from the Chief of Naval Operations and the State of California.

Captain Simmons also served a 22-month tenure in Washington as the Strike Warfare and Naval Aviation Programs Congressional liaison officer in the Navy Office of Legislative Affairs. In this capacity, Captain Simmons provided members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the professional and personal staffs, and many of you, with timely support regarding Navy plans and programs. His contributions enabled Congress and the Navy to work closely in ensuring the Nation possessed a modern and capable naval force.

During his illustrious career, Captain Simmons was the recipient of many awards and commendations including the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, and the Navy Commendation Medal with Gold Star.

Mr. President, Captain Simmons, his wife Carol, and their daughters Erin and Stacey, made many sacrifices during his long career. It is indeed tragic that he has been taken from his family, the Navy, and the Nation he so self-

lessly served. His courage and fortitude marked him as a great patriot. He will be sorely missed. •

TRIBUTE TO TRUMBULL, CONNECTICUT'S WE THE PEOPLE TEAM

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to extend my sincere congratulations to the students of Trumbull High School, who recently won an award at the "We the People * * * The Citizen and the Constitution" national finals in Washington, DC.

The "We the People * * *" program includes a comprehensive curriculum on the history and principles of American constitutional democracy. It culminates in a competition testing student teams' knowledge of the Constitution, structured as a congressional hearing with students testifying as constitutional experts. This innovative approach has received critical acclaim from educators and scholars alike, and the curriculum stands as a model for future educational programs. Students involved in the "We the People * * *" program not only gain an understanding of constitutional history, but many of them also show a much stronger commitment to democratic principles and feel more involved in the political process.

The students from Trumbull High School were recognized for their expertise on Unit 6 "Role of Citizen" of the "We the People * * *" curriculum. I'm very proud of their accomplishment, and would like to recognize them all by name: Katherine Baker, Scott Baker, Heather Beardsley, Annette Besso, Andrew Braverman, Meredith Bryk, Christopher Cheng, Jonathan Chin, Jessica Cohen, Vimala George, Kristy Gordon, Travis Halky, Stephen Henshaw, Ryan Leichsenring, Jennifer Liu, Devon Nykaza, Nicole Perreault, Diane Perry, Anne Rackliffe, Sophia Rountos, Rachel Simonds, and Alan Stern.

In February 1963, President John F. Kennedy said that "the future promise of any nation can be directly measured by the present prospect of its youth." Frighteningly low voter turnout has recently raised concerns about public frustration with our political system. And yet, when I had the opportunity to meet with these Trumbull high schoolers, I was struck by the students' optimism and thoughtfulness about our great constitutional democracy. Their strong sense of civic responsibility provides me with great hope for our future. •

TRIBUTE TO PVT. WALTER C. WETZEL

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to join the Radio Control Club of Detroit in paying tribute to Pvt. Walter C. Wetzel of the U.S. Army 13th Infantry Brigade, 8th Infantry Division. On April 3, 1945, Private Wetzel, a young squad leader with the antitank

company of the 13th Infantry, was keeping watch at his platoon's command post in Birken, Germany. Early in the morning, Private Wetzel detected enemy forces moving in to attack the post. Immediately, he alerted the command post occupants and began fighting against heavy automatic weapons fire. Under cover of darkness, Germans forces moved close to the building and began throwing grenades. During the fighting, two grenades landed in the room from which Private Wetzel and the others were defending the post. With a warning to his fellow soldiers, Private Wetzel threw himself on the grenades just before they exploded.

Sadly, the heroic deed of Private Wetzel cost him his life, but in so doing he saved the lives of others in his division. His comrades were able to continue the defense of the command post while breaking the power of a dangerous German war front. Certainly, his sacrifice was in keeping with the U.S. Army's highest traditions of bravery and heroism. Private Wetzel was laid to rest at the American Battlefield Monuments Commission cemetery in the Netherlands. Shortly after his death, Private Wetzel was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

In further recognition, the Radio Control Club of Detroit has constructed a monument to Private Wetzel on the grounds of Wetzel State Park in Lenox Township of Northern Macomb County. The monument consists of a concrete monolith flagpole base with a bronze plaque inlaid and inscribed. Upon dedication, the field at which the monument will be placed will be named "Wetzel Memorial Flying Field." I ask the Senate to join this organization in remembering one of the many true American patriots who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom. •

TRIBUTE TO DAVID L. CINI

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, any town in America can find somebody to run their local government. But few cities ever have a leader whose courage, hope, and humor serve to inspire others to expect more from themselves and their community. East Lyme was fortunate enough to know one of these leaders—David L. Cini. Mr. Cini served as East Lyme's first selectman since 1989, and, sadly, he died earlier this month at the age of 60.

Eight years ago, I attended a political rally for David Cini that was held in a vacant lot behind a beauty salon in the small town of Niantic, CT, which is part of East Lyme. Also in attendance at this rally were Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, Congressman SAM GEJDENSON, and a host of other local dignitaries. Upon realizing that there were two U.S. Senators, a Congressman, and many other elected officials in attendance at this rally, I asked aloud, "Why are all of these important people gathered behind a beauty salon