

careful look at our voting systems. It means the argument for paper as an essential part of voting systems is becoming more and more convincing. It means we should watch and carefully assess the new standards for testing voting systems that will be employed for the first time in December. I hope these standards have a significant impact, that they catch the vulnerabilities of these systems.

I believe the bill I introduced in May will lead to great improvements in the technology and the processes of elections. The Ballot Integrity Act would immediately prohibit new purchases of paperless voting systems. By 2010, it would require a voter-verified paper record to be produced by all voting systems used in federal elections. It would ensure that laboratories that test voting systems would not be hand-picked by vendors. And it would bar wireless and internet components in voting systems. In addition, States would have to document which individuals have access to voting systems, and they would have to agree on ways to train poll workers on how to operate machinery. This approach deals with all elements of the voting process—and recognizes that good voting equipment cannot be secure without good procedures to protect the integrity of the vote.

While the debate rages over how California should respond to this new report, it is important to stick to the basics. Vote verification is the new consensus. More than half the States use paper records to preserve the vote count.

I know Americans are passionate about ensuring that their votes are counted. California has taken an important step—and uncovered some disturbing information. The Senate should support improving Federal elections by passing the Ballot Integrity Act.

RETIREMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RAY LAHOOD

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to extend my appreciation and best wishes to my good friend, RAY LAHOOD, who recently announced his intention to retire at the end of the 110th Congress.

His retirement next fall will mark the end of a long, successful career representing the 18th District of Illinois—first as a staffer for 12 years for then-minority leader Bob Michel and then as a distinguished member of Congress for seven terms.

Born in the district he has represented for over 13 years, RAY LAHOOD's constituents have always been his No. 1 priority. Long after RAY leaves office, Illinoisans from Peoria to Jacksonville will benefit from his attention to local infrastructure needs, whether it is the roads, hospitals or arts projects of central Illinois.

He has been a champion for economic development in rural communities, expanded use of alternative energy, and

conservation efforts along the Illinois River. RAY and I also worked together earlier this year to help our Nation's servicemembers and veterans by introducing the Lane Evans Mental Health and Benefits Act.

But beyond his many legislative accomplishments is the distinctive spirit that RAY brought to his job. His time in Washington has been marked by a willingness to speak the truth and work across party lines—traits that have earned him the highest respect and admiration from colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

For several years, RAY hosted bipartisan congressional retreats to bring Members of Congress together for an open dialogue about ways to solve the country's problems in a civil manner. At a time in which Congress is marked by ideological warfare and harsh personal rhetoric, RAY is always searching for ways to bridge the partisan divide and find commonsense solutions to the problems facing average Americans. He was—and is—the ideal successor to Bob Michel, the great statesman who mentored him.

On a personal note, I will always be grateful to him for joining me in opening my Springfield office in January 2005 shortly after I came to the Senate. That small gesture of bipartisanship meant a lot to a freshman Senator and is a reflection of RAY's decency.

The people of central Illinois will miss RAY LAHOOD's hard work on their behalf, and I will miss his friendship.

I thank RAY for his many years of service to Illinois and to his country, and I wish him and his family all the best as he embarks upon this next chapter in his life.

TRIBUTE TO UNCLE HAROLD

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if one is going to boast on the Senate floor, I assume I can be forgiven for boasting about close relatives.

My story is about my Uncle Harold—Harold Bach to be exact.

I called Harold last week and asked him what he had been doing. He said he had just gotten back from Minnesota. I asked, "What were you doing there?" He said, "Well I was running in the Senior Olympics events."

I guess it is not too unusual to have someone tell you that they are engaged in some track and field events. But my uncle is 87 years old. I said, "Harold, what events did you enter?" He said, "I ran in the 50 meter, the 100 meter and the 200 meter." I asked, "How did you do?" Harold said, "I won three medals—a gold, a silver and a bronze."

It wasn't news to me to hear that my uncle was running.

At age 72 Harold went to the Prairie Rose Games in North Dakota and just as a lark he entered races for age 70 and above. He easily won all three races that he entered. Then he decided, you know—I must have a talent here. It appears I can run faster than people my age. So he started running in other

States. He ran in the Minnesota Senior Olympics, he ran in the South Dakota Senior Olympics, and then he was in Arizona and California.

He never stopped running. He has now won 100 medals in Senior Olympics events across the country. At age 87, I think he is still angling for more victories.

So I am announcing today that I am going to award my Uncle Harold a certificate, designating him as the oldest, fastest runner in our State's history. No, I have not done any research to demonstrate that, but I am sure it must be true. And besides, he's my uncle.

The message in having an 87-year-old uncle that runs the 100 meter dash in under 20 seconds is inspiring to me, and I hope, to everyone else. It is a message that if you don't know what you can't do, maybe you won't be surprised if you find out you can do it, even if others think it is improbable.

None of us should be limited by our notions of what is impossible. My Uncle Harold has described what is possible for him by trying—and succeeding. It is a lesson that many of us should learn over and over again. Defeat is not about trying and failing. Defeat is failing to try. And when my uncle determined that he was faster than anybody his age, he got himself a pair of running shoes and filled his car with gas. Fifteen years later he has won 100 track and field medals.

So, hats off to my Uncle Harold! His accomplishments in Senior Olympics events are impressive and inspiring.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING MISS ASHLEY SAGISI MOSER

● Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I congratulate Ashley Sagisi Moser, Miss Teen World United States, for her achievements in the 2007 Miss Teen World pageant. She placed first runner-up in the pageant and won the Miss Congeniality Award.

The pageant was hosted in Queensland, Australia, where representatives from 14 countries competed for the title of Miss Teen World 2007. In addition to winning the Miss Congeniality Award, Ashley placed in the top five in every category, which included Miss Talent, Miss Photogenic, Best Costume, and Best Swimsuit.

I am proud of Ashley's accomplishments, especially because she was one of the youngest contestants in this international pageant. Her stage presence and wit have allowed her to excel in pageants. She embodies the spirit of Aloha, which was noted by the judges and her fellow competitors. She represented the State of Hawaii and the United States very well.

I also want to acknowledge Ashley's impressive leadership qualities, which are evident through her involvement in one of the State's most prestigious preparatory schools, Punahou School, and