

reminded of a critical moment in time when our forefathers shaped a new union, one that broke from the traditional. Our Nation was built on the fundamental principle: "That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." As our forefathers endured a life of struggle, but envisioned a life of freedom, we as a Nation must keep in mind the sacrifices that they and others made and the hardships that preserve them.

As we honor individuals who contribute to upholding our civil liberties, we must also take this opportunity to appreciate them for the courage they have displayed to preserve our independence and our freedom. From our armed servicemembers who stand ready to defend our Nation, to 18-year-olds perpetuating our democracy by registering to vote, and to people of all backgrounds around the Nation reaffirming the principle of our union on a daily basis—to all, I pay tribute. Their individual contribution allows us to celebrate our independence every day.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF BELIN-BLANK CENTER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, 20 years ago this summer, the Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development was established at the University of Iowa. Originally created by the Iowa Board of Regents as the Belin National Center for Gifted Education, the center was made possible by a million-dollar endowment that established the Myron and Jacqueline Blank Chair in Gifted Education, which is held to this day by Professor Nicholas Colangelo. In 1995, the center was renamed the Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, honoring a longtime leader in gifted education and a Des Moines philanthropist. In 2008, the Belin-Blank Center celebrates two decades of service to the international gifted education community.

The Belin-Blank Center has earned a strong national and international reputation for its work on behalf of gifted and talented children, which my colleagues know is a subject of great interest to me. Since its inception, the center has pioneered unique and innovative opportunities for students, including academic talent searches designed to discover gifted students; weekend and summer programs on everything from algebra, art, and 3D design to chemistry, creative writing and LEGO robotics; and the National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, which provides early admission to the university.

Professional development for educators has been the foundation upon which the work of the center has been

built. Examples of the center's work in this area include producing internationally acclaimed research symposia and developing specially designed coursework for Iowa's teachers to earn a State of Iowa endorsement in gifted education. As a result of the Belin-Blank Center's efforts, more educators today understand that supporting high-achieving students is an important aspect of successful teaching.

The Belin-Blank Center has successfully competed for private, Federal, and State grants. I am proud to say that this includes two Federal Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Education Grants. This program, which I have championed, is designed to improve our ability to meet the unique learning needs of gifted students nationwide. The limited funding is quite competitive and it is a testament to the quality of the Belin-Blank Center's work that it has secured two such grants. The first grant, for the years 2003 to 2006, focused on the discovery and development of giftedness in students who attend alternative high schools and the second, for the years 2005 to 2008, focused on twice-exceptional students, which are students who are gifted and also have a disability. These projects have contributed substantially to our ability to serve these populations of students, who are often overlooked for gifted education programming.

In 2004, the director and associate director of the Belin-Blank Center, Nicholas Colangelo and Susan Assouline, along with Miraca U.M. Gross, a colleague from Australia, published "A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students." The landmark report helped move the subject of gifted education and accelerated programs for high-achieving students into the educational mainstream, drawing notice from Time, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and hundreds of other media venues.

An important milestone for the center also occurred in 2004 when the Belin-Blank Center and the University of Iowa's Honors Program moved into a new building, the Myron and Jacqueline N. Blank Honors Center, which is located in the heart of the University of Iowa campus. In bringing the two programs together, the University of Iowa became one of the Nation's first schools to offer kindergarten-through-college support for gifted students under one roof.

As an Iowan and an advocate for gifted and talented education, I am very proud to have such a highly esteemed center in Iowa. For its tremendous contribution to the field of gifted education internationally and for its positive impact on the lives of countless gifted and talented students, the Belin-Blank Center is truly deserving of recognition on the occasion of its 20th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL T. MICHAEL MOSELEY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an outstanding military leader and fellow Texan, GEN T. Michael Moseley. For nearly 3 years, General Moseley has served as the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, functioning as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training, and equipment of more than 710,000 Air Force personnel—active duty, Guard, and Reserve airmen, and civilians both in the United States and overseas. His service to our Air Force and to the American people has been both distinguished and admirable; he is, by all accounts, an exceptional American, a dedicated public servant, and an outstanding defender of the principles of democracy and liberty for which this Nation stands.

General Moseley was born in Dallas, TX, and grew up just south of there, in the city of Grand Prairie. His family has a long history of serving the people of Texas, and the United States as a whole. General Moseley's father, as a mason, helped build several well-known and prominent buildings in Dallas. His grandfather served the Texas law enforcement community as a member of the Texas Rangers, that legendary organization established in 1835 to range and guard the Texas Frontier. General Moseley hails from a long line of proud and noble Texans, and has greatly added to that legacy with his own distinguished service in the Air Force.

His impressive military career began in the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, where he earned both a bachelor's and master's degree in political science. On his way to becoming Air Force Chief of Staff, he held key staff positions running the gamut from operational to joint to personnel assignments. He served as commander of numerous units and organizations, including the F-15 Division of the Air Force Fighter Weapons School at Nellis AFB, the 33rd Operations Group at Eglin AFB, and the 57th Wing—the Air Force's largest, most diverse flying wing—also at Nellis AFB. He is a member of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, and he was even knighted in 2006 at the suggestion of Queen Elizabeth II, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to U.S.-United Kingdom relations while in command of air operations over Afghanistan and Iraq in the early days of the global war on terrorism. His list of medals, other awards, and accomplishments is so long as to preclude mentioning them all here.

Without a doubt, General Moseley's selfless service to the United States, especially in this arduous and vital fight against global terrorism, has been instrumental in securing the safety and liberty of all Americans. And while he will be leaving behind his noble and exemplary career with the Air Force, his contributions and the impact of his leadership will be felt for years to