

Tikrit. While in country, Nicholas survived gunshots, 24 I.E.D. blasts, and a helicopter crash. He continues to be treated for injuries that he suffered in the war.

Since retiring from the Army in 2008, Nicholas attended the University of Montana and now drives trucks in North Dakota.

After serving his country with honor, Nicholas Wells never received all of the medals he earned from the Army.

Earlier this month, in the presence of his family, it was my honor to finally present to Nicholas his Iraq Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars. This decoration is a powerful symbol of true heroism, sacrifice, and dedication to service. This Iraq Campaign Medal is presented on behalf of a grateful nation.●

RECOGNIZING PROLITERACY

● Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize ProLiteracy, the world's oldest and largest member organization of adult literacy and basic education programs in the United States representing more than 1,100 community-based organizations and adult basic education programs, which collectively serve more than 286,000 adult learners.

For more than 50 years, ProLiteracy has been headquartered in a suburbanized industrial park in Syracuse, New York. Now, ProLiteracy is moving to the Near West Side of Syracuse. The renovated building is an environmentally and technologically advanced facility that allows the organization to produce and test new and better curricula and educational materials, as well as to develop and implement local training, technical assistance, and professional development projects. The knowledge, best practices, and key findings ProLiteracy will generate through these efforts will be shared locally, nationally, and globally.

Because ProLiteracy's headquarters will be located in an area readily accessible to adult learners, the organization is providing learning experiences such as an adult literacy library housing New Readers Press materials and other resources.

ProLiteracy is to be commended for the work they do and the efforts they support every day to help increase the quality of and access to adult literacy services. An estimated 30 million adults nationwide do not yet have the basic literacy skills to read or write above a fifth-grade level. An additional 60 million American adults do not read or write better than the eighth-grade level. Every day, ProLiteracy works to enable these Americans to receive the necessary resources and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education, occupational training, and establishing a career pathway.

Thank you to ProLiteracy for being the leader in ending the adult literacy crisis in Syracuse, New York—and in communities around the Nation.●

TRIBUTE TO LLOYD JACKSON

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I would like to take a moment to recognize a fellow West Virginian who has devoted himself to the service of our State and the advancement of our education system. As a former college president, I know how invaluable education is to building our communities, growing our economy, and raising and inspiring the next generation. I commend West Virginia State school board member Lloyd Jackson for his enduring commitment to such an important cause.

My friend, Lloyd Jackson served as a State senator for 12 years and he has been a leader in improving both the early and higher education systems of West Virginia. While a senator, he was the primary sponsor of the PROMISE scholarship legislation, a merit-based financial aid program that has helped thousands of West Virginians afford college.

He has also been a vocal advocate for prekindergarten care, and his dedication has led to vast improvements in our State's preschool education. He began his fight through personal experience; his wife had to drive their children long distances to a private day care because of the lack of access in their area. Mr. JACKSON believed that all children should have the same chance to receive a quality early education.

As State senate education chairman, Mr. Jackson championed comprehensive early childhood legislation. In 2002, he helped create West Virginia Universal Pre-K and put the State on track to have universal access by 2012. Thanks to his efforts, West Virginia is today considered a leader in providing public and universal preschool education. In the 2011–12 school year, over 15,000 children were enrolled in prekindergarten, and this year every 4-year-old in the State will have access to quality schooling. In a 2011 report, West Virginia ranked fifth in the Nation in preschool access for 4-year-olds and fourth in spending on prekindergarten programs.

Lloyd Jackson has fought long and hard to make sure our children are receiving the education they deserve. I applaud his commitment to education, and I am proud of the success he has helped West Virginia achieve. Providing our children with a strong education is the greatest investment we could make in the future of our State and of our Nation. Lloyd Jackson deserves our appreciation, and I am proud to have worked with him for years and I am delighted to congratulate him for all he has done for education in West Virginia.●

TRIBUTE TO KENNETH AND VANESE CEDAR

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, every year I have the honor, as a member of the Congressional Coalition on

Adoption Institute, to recognize a West Virginia family for its efforts to promote adoption and provide homes for our Nation's vulnerable children. It is a wonderful program that highlights the change one couple can make in the life of a child.

Throughout my career, I have been a strong advocate of legislation that supports adoption and other permanency efforts. I am inspired by the men and women who devote their lives to caring for these children. Today, I would like to recognize one such West Virginian family: Kenneth and Vanese Cedar, who are truly angels in adoption.

Kenneth and Vanese have cared for 57 children over the years, including two biological sons of their own. Currently, they have adopted three children and serve as guardians for two teenagers. They also care for a foster child. They have raised their children in a close and devoted family, taking them to church, teaching them gardening and cooking, and playing sports together.

Even when challenges have arisen, Kenneth and Vanese have remained dedicated to helping their own family and other children in need. In 2009, Kenneth lost his job. Yet the couple took the obstacle as an opportunity to go back to school and earn regents bachelor of arts degrees, which they hope to use in social work and child protective services. When one of their sons nearly passed away from acute respiratory disease syndrome, they stood together as a family until he recovered, and he recently welcomed a child of his own.

Kenneth and Vanese Cedar are a selfless and giving couple who deserve our respect and admiration. They have provided so many children with not simply a home but a family. I would like to thank these angels in adoption for the love and care they have provided to so many. They are truly an inspiration.●

TRIBUTE TO DAVE AND LAURA WHELCHER

● Mr. JOHANNIS. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a remarkable foster couple from Harrisburg, NE, whom I recently nominated to be 2012 'Angels in Adoption' recipients. Dave and Laura Whelcher are the parents of two grown biological children, Chance and Jenna, as well as four adopted children, Reuben, Josefina, Arielle and San Juan, who are siblings. They are hoping to finalize the adoption of a fifth sibling, Kayleigh, by the end of the year. Each of the adopted children has come into their home with special physical, occupational or speech therapy needs.

Dave and Laura's dedication to providing these children with the love and support they need is incredible. As I witnessed firsthand during a visit to their family farm in August, the Whelchers are doing an outstanding job ensuring their children are able to live full and happy lives.

But the Whelchers' kindness and compassion does not stop with their