

Games as members of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

RECOGNIZING MICHIGAN'S 2012 PARALYMPIANS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a moving 11-day journey recently came to an end. Nearly 4,300 athletes from 166 countries traveled to London, England, to fulfill their dream of representing their country at the 2012 Paralympic games. I congratulate each of these athletes on a job well done and for their hard work, determination and triumph. Their accomplishments inspired us all and help to broaden our sense of what is possible for individuals living with a disability.

Shortly after the 2012 Olympic games concluded, Olympic officials worked feverishly to transform the Olympic venues for the upcoming Paralympic games. Their task was formidable, and their work was impressive. And once again, London proved to be an exceedingly welcoming host. In fact, more than 2.7 million spectators attended the games, shattering the previous mark and making these games the best attended in history. Many venues were filled to capacity. The energy and excitement of the fans was impressive and a wonderful inspiration for these athletes to showcase their talents. While the world watched with joy and amazement, the athletes competed fiercely, setting an astonishing 251 world records in the process.

Those in attendance and audiences around the world were treated to many dazzling performances and were introduced to some truly inspiring personal stories. One such story is that of LT. Brad Synder. Almost 1 year ago to the day, Lieutenant Synder was bravely serving his country in Afghanistan when a bomb exploded, rendering him blind. One year later, he stood in London, again representing his country, with two gold medals and a silver in swimming around his neck and a world record in his grasp. In the face of such a tragic and life-altering injury, this brave soldier refused to let this injury define him and forged ahead, setting his sights on a new goal. There is also LCDR Steven Peace who began cycling during rehabilitation from a stroke he suffered during Active Duty and competed for Team USA in that event. And there is Scot Severn, another former soldier, who won bronze in shot put at these games after recovering from injuries sustained from a lightning strike while on duty. These are but a few of the seemingly endless stories of perseverance and strength that define the lives of these athletes and enrich the lives of all of us.

It was in 1948 that the seed of what would grow to become the second largest sporting event in the world was planted in London. Sir Ludwig Guttman sought to inspire recently wounded World War II veterans by or-

ganizing a sporting event to raise their spirits and aid their rehabilitation. After years of increasing participation and awareness, this sporting event, which was conceived to parallel the Olympic games, would formally become known as the Paralympic games in 1960. In 2012, 227 athletes represented the United States in London.

There were many Paralympic athletes with ties to Michigan on Team USA. They represented their Nation and Michigan admirably. They include Steve Peace in cycling, Asya Miller in goalball, Robin Theyoung in goalball, Tucker Dupree in swimming, Scott Severn in track and field, Bryan Barten in wheelchair tennis, and Mackenzie Soldan in wheelchair tennis. Along with these impressive athletes, I also congratulate the legions of coaches, trainers, officials, support staff, family and friends who played indispensable roles for these athletes and helped to make their performances possible.

There are more than 24 million Americans living with a disability and many more who face some sort of physical, visual or mental challenge. The athletes who competed in London sent a strong, compelling signal that, while their circumstance may seem daunting, there are many mountains to climb and races to win if they are determined and willing to pursue excellence in whatever field they choose, whether it be the track, a classroom or any other worthy pursuit. These games also bring greater awareness and more resources to efforts to increase the availability of physical activity for disabled Americans across the Nation, the benefits of which have been well-documented in recent years.

The 2012 Paralympic games dazzled us with impressive athletic feats, inspired us with stories of courage and perseverance, and reminded us that we can all overcome adversity and pursue excellence both in competition and in life. The 2012 summer Paralympic games, like the Olympic games that preceded it, was a stage on which athletes from across the globe came together in friendly competition. Barb and I salute every athlete who represented Team USA in London. As one organizer eloquently stated, "The Paralympians have lifted the cloud of limitation." For that, we owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

2012 PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize three of our Nation's inspiring Paralympians, with Connecticut roots, who competed, along with 227 American teammates and more than 4,000 athletes from over 160 countries, in this year's Paralympic games in London. During these games, which took place from August 29 to September 9, the United States brought home 98 medals, including 31 gold medals. The exceptional drive, discipline, and dreams of these athletes

are as extraordinary as the medals. Their personal stories of sacrifice and hard work, effort and energy, and aspirations turned into realities, despite setbacks and adversity, are truly remarkable.

In 1948 at Aylesbury, England's Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the idea of the Paralympics was formed, and so it is historically significant that England hosted this year's Paralympic games. Sir Ludwig Guttman envisioned including disabled veterans in international sports competition, and in 1948 his dream was realized in the International Wheelchair Games. In 1960, Rome hosted the first official Paralympic games as we know them today. As we look back at this year's games—one of the largest Paralympics in history—we celebrate this legacy. We are reminded of how important these games were for the rehabilitation of our disabled World War II veterans.

For Tara Profitt of Newington, CT, and member of the 2012 U.S. Paralympic Table Tennis Team, England as host country is personally significant. Ms. Profitt competed in the women's singles competition at the 1984 Paralympics hosted in Stoke Mandeville, England, but always hoped to have the opportunity to play alongside her college friend and fellow table tennis champion, Pamela Fontaine, in the women's team class. This year, in addition to participating individually in the women's single class events, Ms. Profitt and Ms. Fontaine were selected to represent the United States together in the women's team event, reuniting again on familiar territory. Ms. Profitt has credited Ms. Fontaine with inspiring her to become the athlete she is today, encouraging her to engage in sports again after the diving injury that she suffered as a teenager. They have worked hard to qualify over the past few years, traveling around the world to compete, and this year achieved the goal that they have held dearly for decades: to play together, celebrating their country and friendship on an international stage.

Representing the United States in track and field, three-time gold medalist Paul Nitz traveled from Bloomfield, CT, to participate in his third Paralympic games. This year, he was given the tremendous honor of serving as track captain for the U.S. Paralympic Track and Field team, inspiring both first-time and veteran athletes. Mr. Nitz has an accomplished athletic record: He won the Gold in the 100m event in 1992, 1996, and 2000 and broke the 100m world record during the 2012 Swiss Series. This year, I am proud to announce that he brought home the bronze in the 100m. Equally commendable, Mr. Nitz works in his community—as an employee of the Hartford Insurance Group—to positively change public perception regarding disability. In addition to his impressive athletic achievements, through his efforts at the Hartford, he has led great strides across the Nation in dispelling prejudice, misconception, and judgment.

I also applaud the Hartford Insurance Group for their commitment to the Paralympic games: Since 2003, it has been a founding partner of the U.S. Paralympics, an official division of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Five-time Paralympian Scott Danberg calls Stamford his hometown, and Connecticut has been proud to follow him throughout his impressive athletic career. Recently, as a well-known and regarded member of the U.S. Paralympic track and field team, he competed in the men's discus event, throwing his personal best for this season in London. And this year he was nominated by his fellow track and field members and then chosen by a vote by the U.S. paralympic team as our Nation's flag bearer during opening ceremonies. He adds this tremendous honor to his past accomplishments, including the bronze at the 2011 IPC World Championships, the gold at the 2010 U.S. Paralympics Track & Field National Championships in both discus and shot put, and the silver in javelin at the 1998 Paralympic games.

I hope that Connecticut's Paralympians can continue to promote international and national awareness and engagement and we can continue to come together as a nation, recognizing what unites us. Thank you for joining me in applauding our amazing American athletes and those around the world who have shown the athleticism, stamina, and national identity that transcends differences.

RECOGNIZING MISSISSIPPI'S OLYMPIANS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the gifted athletes from my home State of Mississippi who represented the United States in the 2012 London Olympic games and Paralympic games. They join an extraordinary legacy built by generations of great American Olympians and Paralympians, and their historic successes on the world stage are a proud moment for Mississippi.

In the London Olympic games, Gulfport native Brittney Reese became the first American woman to win a gold medal in long jump since Jackie Joyner-Kersey, who won it more than two decades ago in the Seoul games. The Olympic title tops an impressive career for the former University of Mississippi standout and four-time world champion, who has become an unmatched competitor over the past several years.

Particularly heartfelt and inspiring was Reese's dedication of her gold-medal success to the people of Mississippi and those still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, which damaged her family's home 7 years ago. As she told reporters, "This is a great way for me to bring something home and show them we can all do this together."

Bianca Knight of Ridgeland helped lead the women's 4x100-meter relay team to a gold-medal win in an incred-

ible 40.82 seconds—besting the world record set by East Germany in 1985. The performance earned the United States its first Olympic gold medal in the women's relay event since 1996 in Atlanta.

In the men's 4x100-meter relay, Coldwater sprinter Trell Kimmons and his teammates blazed through to a silver-medal finish—setting a new American record. Former Jackson State University track star Michael Tinsley also won silver in the 400-meter hurdles. Isiah Young, a talented athlete at the University of Mississippi, made his Olympic debut in the exciting 200-meter dash, advancing to the semifinals with an impressive run against decorated Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt.

One Mississippian continued her Olympic success this time as a coach for the U.S. women's basketball team. Assistant coach Jennifer Gillom, an Ole Miss graduate from Abbeville, helped lead the team to a gold-medal victory in London. She won gold as a player during the Seoul Games and is the first person in Ole Miss women's basketball history to be part of multiple medal wins.

Like the Olympics, the London Paralympic games were also a spectacular display of athleticism and perseverance. The international sports event for athletes with disabilities began shortly after World War II as a way for those with war injuries to enhance their quality of life. More than 4,000 athletes competed in this year's Paralympic games—including four Mississippians who captivated the world with outstanding performances.

Shaquille Vance of Houston set a new American record in the men's 200-meter-T42 event—earning the silver medal. Richard Browne of Jackson sprinted to a silver-medal finish in the highly anticipated 100-meter-T44 race. Top-ranked competitors Ryan Estep and Joseph Brinson of Florence showcased their expertise as part of the U.S. wheelchair fencing team, with Estep competing in the epee-style event and Brinson in the saber-style competition.

I thank the family and friends who have supported and encouraged these athletes throughout this incredible journey. The Olympics and Paralympics are a dream for athletes around the world and a life-changing experience for those who participate. I congratulate these inspiring Mississippians on their remarkable accomplishments. They have worked hard and made us proud.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 558) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 558

Whereas the 2012 Olympic Games were held in London, England from July 27, 2012, to August 12, 2012, and the 2012 Paralympic Games were held in London, England from August 29, 2012, to September 9, 2012;

Whereas 532 Olympians and 227 Paralympians competed on behalf of Team USA in London, England;

Whereas the great State of Nevada contributed 4 athletes to the United States Olympic Team and 1 athlete to the United States Paralympic Team;

Whereas the Olympians and Paralympian from the State of Nevada proudly represented the United States in competition and displayed an admirable dedication to the spirit of the Olympic Games;

Whereas Amanda Bingson of Las Vegas, Nevada, competed in the Olympic Women's Hammer Throw event;

Whereas Jacob Dalton of Reno, Nevada, competed in the Olympic Men's Gymnastics Floor Exercise and Men's Team events;

Whereas Connor Fields of Las Vegas, Nevada, competed in the Olympic Men's BMX event;

Whereas Michael Hunter II of Las Vegas, Nevada, competed in the Olympic Men's Heavyweight Boxing event;

Whereas Courtney Jordan of Henderson, Nevada, competed in the Paralympic Women's 400m Freestyle, 100m Breaststroke, 100m Backstroke, 200m Individual Medley, 50m Freestyle, and 100m Freestyle events;

Whereas Ms. Jordan won silver medals in the 400m Freestyle, 50m Freestyle, and 100m Freestyle, and a bronze medal in the 100m Backstroke;

Whereas the citizens of the State of Nevada and the people of the United States stand united in respect and admiration for the Nevadan Olympians and Paralympian, and the athletic accomplishments, sportsmanship, and dedication of those athletes to excellence in the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics;

Whereas the many accomplishments of the Nevadan Olympians and Paralympian would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many others, including the United States Olympic Committee, the relevant United States National Governing Bodies, and the many administrators, coaches, and family members who provided critical support for the athletes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate extends sincere congratulations for the accomplishments and gratitude for the sacrifices of the athletes from the State of Nevada and throughout the United States on the United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams and to everyone who supported the efforts of those athletes at the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

NATIONAL SAVE FOR RETIREMENT WEEK

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 555 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 555) supporting the goals and ideals of "National Save for Retirement Week," including raising public