

these efforts in a coordinated manner and with backing from both the Governments of Haiti and Armenia and of the United States.

While it is important to start putting trees in the ground, this bill is about more than just planting trees. Our government has tried that approach in the past and it has proven to be ineffective.

This bill empowers the U.S. Government to work with Haiti and Armenia to develop forest-management programs based on proven, market-based models.

These models will be tailored to help both countries manage their conservation and reforestation efforts in ways that can be measured.

The bill encourages cooperation and engagement with local communities and organizations, provides incentives to protect trees through income-generating growth, and authorizes debt-for-nature swaps, focusing on sustainable restoration of forests, watersheds, and other key land surface areas.

Most importantly, the bill does not authorize any new funds. It will help make sure such existing funds are spent wisely and productively.

It will help the people of Haiti and Armenia rebuild their critical ecosystems, which in turn will have tremendous long-term impacts on their qualities of life.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

TRIBUTE TO CARMEN VELÁSQUEZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to thank Carmen Velásquez of Chicago, who is retiring as executive director of Alivio Medical Center, for her many years of service to the Latino Community and the city of Chicago.

As a community leader, civil rights activist, health and education advocate, and one of my personal “she-ros,” Carmen Velásquez has dedicated her life to justice and equitable health access for all. As one of the original founders of the Alivio Medical Center, she has served the community for 25 years, helping grow one community health center to a network of 6 clinics, with plans to open two new sites this year.

Carmen is the daughter of Mexican immigrants—her father harvested beets in South Dakota before coming to Illinois to start a successful jukebox business. Carmen went on to earn degrees from Loyola University Chicago and the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico.

In her professional career, Carmen dedicated her talents and energy to universal health care and immigration reform as a community organizer. She was a social worker and bilingual education specialist, who quickly became a pillar of Chicago’s Latino community.

As a member of Chicago’s Board of Education, she realized that more needed to be done not only to address

the needs of the Latino community in schools, but also in health clinics.

In 1988, Carmen’s mission was clear; she needed to find a place to address the too often neglected medical needs of her community. While walking through Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood in search of clinic space, Carmen came upon a muffler shop parking lot littered with rusting old trucks. She went inside the shop and asked its owner if the lot was for sale.

His response? “Offer me something.”

Carmen Velásquez made an offer, and with that, she began her active campaign to raise \$2.1 million for construction of the first of Alivio’s community health centers.

Carmen’s passion and tenacity turned her dream into a reality. Alivio Medical Center opened its doors 1 year later in 1989, as a bilingual, bicultural nonprofit community health center. Alivio has since grown to become a respected advocacy organization that is also an essential safety net provider for many low-income and vulnerable residents of Chicago.

Because of Carmen Velásquez’s hard work and dedication, Alivio continues to meet the primary health care needs of over 20,000 Spanish-speaking, predominantly Mexican immigrants who fall through the cracks of the health care system every year. The residents of the Pilsen, Little Village and Back of the Yards neighborhoods who come to the clinic every year know that, regardless of their income level or insurance coverage, they can expect the very best quality care.

Carmen’s commitment to her community has not gone unnoticed. She has been recognized for excellence in her work throughout the years. She was recently recognized at halftime by the Chicago Bears with the National Football League’s, NFL, Hispanic Heritage Leadership Award, and she has been honored with the MALDEF Lifetime Achievement Award, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Community Health Leadership Award, and Premio Ohtli, the highest honor bestowed by the Government of Mexico on an individual for service to Mexicans living abroad. Illinois Governor Pat Quinn has also honored Carmen as the Latino Heritage Month “Trailblazer of the Day.”

I was fortunate to meet Carmen and her family early in my Senate career. On so many occasions I have counted on Carmen’s wise counsel and caring heart to help me through the challenges we face. If I could make one phone call before facing a tough decision on an issue of social justice, particularly in the Hispanic community, I would call Carmen Velásquez and know that her life experience, caring heart, and street-level wisdom would never disappoint me.

Carmen’s perseverance and her indomitable spirit are tremendous. Her willingness to stand up as a voice for the community during her tenure as Alivio’s executive director has left an

incredible legacy to Chicago’s Latino community enormously.

Congratulations to Carmen on a spectacular career. I thank Carmen for all her years of distinguished service. I know I speak for Alivio’s professional staff, the thousands of families that have benefited from her caring leadership, and all of Chicago when I say she will be sorely missed.

I wish her the best as she opens the next chapter in her life.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President. In October of 2013, Veterans in the Last Frontier and Alaska-Golden Heart hubs of Honor Flight will be traveling to Washington, DC, to visit their memorials. I would like to welcome these heroes to our Nation’s capital and take this time to recognize their service to our Nation.

I would like to record the individual names of the World War II veterans selected for this trip: Mr. Jacob Knapp, Army; Mr. Stanley Coleman, Navy; Mr. John Collins, Army; Mr. William Field, Navy; Mr. Alvin Hershberger, Army; Mr. Norman Hogg, Army; Mr. Howard Hunt, Army; Mr. Alfred Kehl, Army; Mr. George Miller, Air Force; Mr. Manuel Norat, Army; Mr. Leonard Nugent, Navy; Mr. Dale Parker, Navy; Mr. Fredrick Samsun, Marines and Air Force; Mr. Marshall Solberg, Navy; Mr. Lafton Wells, Navy; Ms. Ellen White, Air Force; Ms. Juliana Wilson, Navy; Mr. Allen Woodward, Navy; Mr. Edward Young Jr., Air Force; Mr. James Brewster, Navy; Mr. Elvin Brush, Air Force; Mr. Arnold Booth, Army; Mr. Conrad Ryan, Army; Mr. William Miller, Army; Mr. Louis Palmer, Navy; Mr. James Dodge, Marines; Mr. Roy Helms, Army; Mr. Nelson McBirney, Navy and Mr. Wenzel Raith, Navy.

These veterans from Alaska join over 90,000 other veterans from across the country, who, since 2005, have traveled to our Nation’s capital to visit and reflect at memorials built here in their honor. This Honor Flight trip was made possible by generous public donations and contributions from those who wish to honor these heroes.

We owe a great deal to our servicemen and veterans who put themselves in harm’s way for our Nation and for our security. The sacrifices made by these heroes are truly incredible and without their honor, courage, commitment, and sacrifice, we would not enjoy the freedoms we cherish today.

Each of these veterans have my thanks for their service, and I very appreciate the staff, volunteers and supporters of the Honor Flight program who make these trips happen. Again, thank you to all Alaska veterans and the volunteers for their dedication, commitment, and service.

ESTEVEZ NOMINATION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, yesterday, I voted to confirm Alan Estevez to