

evidence of wrongdoing by Planned Parenthood. Threatening to shut down the government over an organization that annually provides 400,000 cervical cancer screenings, 500,000 breast exams, and 4.5 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted diseases is completely uncalled for.

Arguments that there are other providers that can fill the important and critical role of Planned Parenthood are not persuasive. According to the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood serves more contraceptive clients each year than any other similar provider, including federally qualified health centers. In more than 300 counties across the country, safety net providers such as Planned Parenthood are the providers of choice for nearly half of women. Furthermore, Planned Parenthood is the sole safety net provider in nearly 100 of these counties.

Planned Parenthood services cannot be easily replaced. In an attempt to defund Planned Parenthood, one State submitted a list of providers they said could replace Planned Parenthood's critical women's health care services. This list that the State provided included dentists, ophthalmologists, radiologists, and nursing homes. Think about that. Providers are not widgets.

After a Federal judge called their bluff, the State cut their list from over 2,000 providers to just 29 providers who actually are able to provide primary care services to women. Those 29 providers could not possibly absorb the thousands of patients Planned Parenthood served in that State. Planned Parenthood has long been in the crosshairs of the anti-choice movement.

This recent attack on Planned Parenthood is based on heavily edited videos by radical fringe groups. I refer my colleagues to a letter from Planned Parenthood's Cecile Richards to House and Senate leadership dated August 27, 2015.

Instead of improving the lives of women by passing legislation raising the minimum wage, closing the gender pay gap or ensuring paid leave for all workers, my colleagues across the aisle continue to narrowly focus on ways to further marginalize women. Instead of introducing continuing resolutions that contain these kinds of poison pills, such as defunding Planned Parenthood, we must pass clean legislation that keeps our government funded, that provides needed and critical services to the people of this country. I ask my colleagues to join with me.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KATHRYN K. MATTHEW TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 298, Kathryn Matthew; that the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that following the disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no interviewing action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kathryn K. Matthew, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years.

The Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Kathryn K. Matthew, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING TROOPER JOSEPH CAMERON PONDER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a Kentucky State Police trooper who was tragically lost in the line of duty. Trooper Joseph Cameron Ponder, of Rineyville, was shot and killed while pursuing a suspect on September 13. He was 31 years old.

Cameron Ponder was proud to be a Kentucky State trooper. "He was eager and he absolutely loved his job," is how a State police spokesman described him. He was also new to the job, having just graduated in January of this year

from the Kentucky State Police Training Academy. He was stationed at the State police post in Mayfield.

Before becoming a Kentucky State trooper, Cameron served in the U.S. Navy. He enlisted in September 2007, when he was 23 years old, and became a Navy diver. Over the next 6 years he was stationed in places as varied as Great Lakes, IL; Coronado, CA; Panama City, FL; and San Diego, CA.

During his Navy service he received several awards, medals and decorations, including the Combat Action Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Expert Rifle Marksmanship Ribbon and the Expert Pistol Marksmanship Ribbon.

Cameron was discharged from the Navy in July 2013. He was a member of the Church of Christ in Elizabethtown, KY. He was also a dedicated hunter and fisherman who enjoyed the outdoors.

Sadly, Trooper Ponder is the second trooper from the Mayfield post to be killed in the line of duty this year. In June, Trooper Eric K. Chrisman was killed in a vehicle crash. He also had served with the Kentucky State Police for under a year.

Members of Trooper Ponder's family who are suffering from this loss include his father, Joseph Ponder; his mother, Brenda Tiffany, and her husband Allan; his fiancée, Chrystal Coleman; his sister, Kelly Ponder; his brothers, Damon Tiffany and Travis Tiffany; his grandmother, Erika Shook; his niece, Mahlea Starks; and many other family members and friends.

I am proud to share Trooper Ponder's story with my colleagues here in the United States Senate. We're thinking of his family today as well as his fellow officers of the Kentucky State Police. We are praying for the loved ones he has left behind who are feeling this devastating loss.

We are honored by Trooper Ponder's service and his extraordinary sacrifice on behalf of his fellow Kentuckians. I hold the deepest admiration and respect for Trooper Ponder and for every brave police officer across the Bluegrass State. Law enforcement is both an honorable profession and a dangerous one, and Kentucky is grateful they have made a sacred pledge to protect and defend our communities and our lives.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL MARTIN E. DEMPSEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I recognize and pay tribute to GEN Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for his lifetime of service to our country. His retirement marks more than 41 years of selfless devotion to our military and our Nation. A leader of exceptional character and consequence, his humility, courage, and expertise will be sorely missed.

A New Jersey native and 1974 graduate of the United States Military Academy, General Dempsey was well prepared to lead our Armed Forces these last 4 years as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A career armor officer, he has commanded at every level, from platoon leader to combatant commander, and his assignments have carried him and his family across the United States and around the world.

As a company grade officer, he served with the 2nd Cavalry in Europe and the 10th Cavalry at Fort Carson. Following troop command, he earned his masters of arts in English from Duke University and was assigned to the English Department at West Point. He subsequently earned additional advanced degrees from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the National War College.

In 1991, General Dempsey deployed with the 3rd Armored Division in support of Operation Desert Storm. He later commanded a battalion in Germany and then served as the Army's "senior scout" as the 67th colonel of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment—the Brave Rifles—before reporting to the joint staff as an assistant deputy director in the J-5 and later as a special assistant to the 14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 2003, General Dempsey commanded the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad and returned to Iraq in 2005 as the commanding general of the Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq. From 2007 to 2008, he was the deputy commander and then acting commander of U.S. Central Command, and from 2008 to 2011, he commanded U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Appointed to serve as the Army's 37th Chief of Staff, General Dempsey led his beloved Army a short 149 days before being tapped to serve as the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In that capacity and as the Nation's highest-ranking military officer, he has served as the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and this Congress these past 4 years.

General Dempsey's exceptional ability to coordinate and build consensus among the office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the services, and the combatant commands has served us well and ensured those charged with civilian oversight of the military have received the best military advice possible to achieve our national objectives. Additionally, he has built trust and strengthened relations with both national and foreign leaders.

During a period of complex and rapid global change, coupled with the military's exceptionally high operational tempo and unprecedented fiscal challenges, General Dempsey's decisive leadership enabled the success of military operations around the world. He masterfully guided the Joint Force to

extraordinary execution of global responsibilities, from counterterrorism and crisis response, to supporting our allies, building partner capacity, and humanitarian assistance. His efforts strengthened key alliances, bolstered new partnerships, and more closely integrated the military with the other instruments of our national power against the many threats we face.

Because of those many threats, General Dempsey's tenure as Chairman has been marked by significant transitions in military operations and personnel. His exemplary stewardship helped reset our forces after the conclusion of major combat operations and has prepared them for an increasingly dynamic and unpredictable security environment.

His leadership was critical during the transition of authority to the Afghan National Security Forces following Operation Enduring Freedom. Additionally, in the fight against ISIL, his expert advice helped formulate the military component of a sustainable counter-ISIL strategy. He also guided the military's work as part of the U.S. interagency response to the Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa.

He guided the Joint Force to capitalize on the lessons learned over these past 14 years fighting as a Joint team, undertaking reforms that have driven "jointness" further into our military's capability development and operational planning. In addition, recognizing the shifting nature of the security environment and our ability to respond to it, General Dempsey led a paradigm shift in how we posture and employ this Joint team around the world.

At the same time, the past few years have witnessed exponential growth of the cyber threat against our Nation, and, in response, General Dempsey has deftly pushed the expansion of our cyber capabilities. He has pressed hard for cyber legislation, championed the rapid development of our cyber forces, and implemented the Joint Information Environment to optimize and better defend our military's information technology infrastructure. These initiatives will be critical to the future security of our Nation.

As principal steward of the military profession, he renewed an internal commitment to strengthen the profession of arms and reinvigorated education, training, and leader development. He managed historic decisions, including reforms to general and flag officer ethics, Department-wide improvements in sexual assault prevention and response, expansion of service opportunities for women, and the extension of benefits to same-sex spouses of uniformed servicemembers and Department of Defense civilian employees. His stewardship set conditions to preserve the strength of the all-volunteer force and to ensure servicemembers departing the military are successfully reintegrated back into their communities.

As he retires, General Dempsey should take great pride in his role in

ensuring our military remains the best supported, best trained, best equipped, and best led force on the planet. His contributions to our national security are a testament to his remarkable leadership and selfless dedication. During trying times, under sometimes harsh scrutiny and with high national security stakes at hand, his steadfast commitment to the readiness and welfare of Joint Force servicemembers and their families, as well as his exceptional support for commanders and their warfighting requirements, made significant and lasting contributions to our Nation.

With over four decades of exemplary service to our Nation, General Dempsey and his family deserve our most heartfelt gratitude and admiration. He and Deanie have my very best wishes for a long, happy, and well-deserved retirement. Our Nation, our Joint Force, and our Army are all better for his leadership and distinguished service.

OBSERVING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war, we reflect with reverence upon a generation that served with honor, distinction, and selflessness. We pay tribute to the 9 million men and women who wore our Nation's uniform during the Vietnam era, answered our Nation's call to service, and advanced the sacred ideals of liberty and self-determination.

All gave some, and some gave all. Currently, the names of the more than 58,000 patriots who gave their all are forever etched in black granite on the Vietnam Memorial in our Nation's Capital. The names of the nearly 1,800 Americans who remain unaccounted for are forever etched in our hearts.

Nearly 350 patriots from Maine are listed among the killed or missing. Among those names is U.S. Army SGT Donald Skidgel, a Medal of Honor recipient, born in my hometown of Caribou, ME, who served in Vietnam and who gave his life saving the lives of others. On September 14 of this year, Navy pilot LT Neil Taylor was finally laid to rest in his hometown of Rangleley, ME, 50 years to the day after his aircraft was shot down on his 68th mission and he was reported missing. They were patriots in the best American tradition. We will never forget them.

May the families of those who fell and of those unaccounted for find peace in knowing that the American people share their loss and grief. We will always be grateful for the valor and sacrifice of their loved ones. And we will never forget them.

From the founding of our Nation to today, the freedom we hold sacred has been earned by our fellow citizens. Our Nation's history has been written by the men and women who serve, despite the sacrifices, with courage and devotion. The men and women of the Vietnam era carried on that tradition.