

REMOVAL OF NOMINATION
OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on December 18, 2015, I placed a hold on the nomination of Dr. Janine Ann Davidson to be Under Secretary of the Navy. As I made clear in my statement at that time, my action was not directed at Dr. Davidson; rather, it was directed at the pending promotion by the Navy of RDML Brian Losey and concerns I had related to findings by the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General concerning Rear Admiral Losey's retaliation against whistleblowers. I have been informed by the Navy that Rear Admiral Losey will not be promoted. Consequently, I am removing my hold on Dr. Davidson's nomination and will support her confirmation.

To quickly review why I took this action, the DOD OIG conducted several extensive investigations into allegations of retaliation by Rear Admiral Losey against senior members of his joint command. In three of those investigations, the DOD IG concluded that he wrongfully retaliated against his staff even after he was advised not to do so. The DOD IG also concluded that his immediate subordinates carried out retaliatory actions at his behest in two of those cases.

I found the OIG findings compelling. In a January 14, 2016, letter to Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, Senator McCAIN and Senator REED, in their capacity as chairman and ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, also cited the OIG findings in support of their request to Secretary Mabus that Losey not be promoted.

Notwithstanding Rear Admiral Losey's long service to our country, the Navy would have been wrong to dismiss the OIG findings and promote him. Doing so would have sent exactly the wrong message, namely that retaliation against whistleblowers is acceptable.

One of the pillars of our system of government is the rule of law; a principle that applies no less to our military and to the vital principle of civilian control over the military. It is illegal to retaliate against whistleblowers, whether civilian or military, and I commend the DOD inspector general and his staff for their diligence in these investigations.

I commend Secretary Mabus and the Navy for taking what I believe is the right course of action in this situation, but my concern with the protection of whistleblowers did not begin with the Losey case, and it will not end with the Losey case. I will continue to work here in the Senate to ensure that those who come forward to expose waste, fraud, or abuse are protected.

In the meantime, I encourage the nominee, Dr. Janine Ann Davidson, to focus on the hard work she has before her in addressing whistleblower retaliation issues in the military.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, today the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration. I applaud the work of my colleagues Senators THUNE and NELSON. Their leadership on this important legislation was critical. I would like to make clear that, while we took important steps forward with this legislation, more work remains to be done to ensure the United States remains a global leader in aviation, safety, and innovation.

Going into this year, many on the Commerce Committee, along with Department of Transportation Secretary Foxx and FAA Administrator Huerta and key stakeholders, aimed high on FAA reauthorization. We aimed high because there are big ideas we need to address when it comes to aviation in this country.

From the current state and financing of our airport infrastructure, to completing NextGen implementation, to accelerating commercial use of UAS technology, to new proposals about our Air Traffic Control system, there were a lot of innovative ideas on the table, and while we made strides on some, more work remains to be done. There is widespread agreement that the status quo is not acceptable, and I was pleased to join my colleagues in taking this initial step forward to reauthorize the FAA for the upcoming 18 months.

Furthermore, I am pleased that I was able to put forth amendments that were included in this bill to ensure adequate staffing levels at the Newark air traffic control tower. In addition, we were able to secure a much-needed study of the New York and New Jersey airports, which cover the busiest airspace in the country. Findings from this study will enable us to make informed decisions about how best to address this staffing problem in the future.

I am also concerned about staffing levels at the Transportation Security Administration, TSA. There have been incredibly long delays at Newark airport because of inadequate staffing of TSA agents at our airport. Safety is absolutely paramount in our airports. It is my hope that we can achieve both topnotch security and an efficient, reliable process for travelers using our airports. Increased staffing should help us achieve that goal.

In this reauthorization, I was pleased to work with Senator CANTWELL to increase competition in the Newark airport with the hope that increased competition and opening up more flight slots at the airport may yield more options and price points for consumers. But I must stress that these changes cannot move forward without ensuring the airport is equipped to handle more traffic and passengers. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on this issue and am excited by the opportunities this could bring for my constituents.

We also made progress on furthering the integration of unmanned aerial systems, UAS, or drones into our airspace in our legislation. This technology is literally taking off around the world. It has the power to enhance search and rescue, deliver humanitarian aid, improve agriculture practices, and newsgathering. I introduced the Commercial UAS Modernization Act to help advance this technology and was pleased to see many of our ideas incorporated in this legislation. I worked with committee leadership to further advance a microUAS rule, which would allow U.S. businesses to fly micro-drones under 4.4 pounds responsibly and safely.

Advancing microUAS use will bring tremendous innovations and new efficiencies across the country and will keep the United States on par with other developed nations who have been making great strides ahead of us in utilizing this technology. From improving research to providing unmanned bridge inspections, the benefits of this technology are truly limitless. UAS has the power to save lives and create new efficiencies across industries. I am excited to see what the innovators and entrepreneurs come up with as a result of our rule which sets forth clear safety guidelines for responsible operation.

Finally, I want to address a couple of amendments that I put forth that were not included in this legislation and express my sincere hope that the chairman and ranking member will work with me before this bill gets to floor. I introduced two amendments to the bill that would address disadvantaged business enterprise, or DBE, projects. The goal of this program, of course, is to promote equity and inclusion in federally financed transportation projects. While neither of these amendments were incorporated into this legislation as of yet, I am confident that we can work together to advance this important policy goal. One amendment would ensure conformance of the DOT size standard for small businesses to the metric defined by the Small Business Administration.

This update will enable more minority and women-owned businesses to compete for infrastructure work. The second amendment sets goals for minority and women-owned businesses on projects financed only by passenger facility charges, or PFCs. I ask the chairman and ranking member to continue to work with me as this bill goes to the floor to advance these two important goals.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE ENZI

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, on March 29 in Laramie, the University of Wyoming will recognize the work of Senator MIKE ENZI with an official dedication of the Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility. It is a well-deserved honor and one that I would like to share with my fellow Senators.

The state of the art facility opened in January of 2016. With more than 107,000 square feet and over 30 labs, the University of Wyoming Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility will allow 900 students from multiple disciplines to be actively engaged in lab studies at the same time. The design of the facility allows students to enjoy an active learning environment that encourages continuous interaction between instructors and students. Classrooms are laid out in such a way that instructors have the flexibility to adjust their lessons to accommodate the needs and interests of the students, ensuring that they are always in an environment most conducive to learning.

There is no better way to honor the lifetime work of Senator ENZI than to name this facility in his honor. Throughout his years as an accountant and in elected office, MIKE has been a solid leader who is willing to take on tough challenges. From his time as mayor in Gillette, a town that truly represents the definition of an American boomtown, to his work in the U.S. Senate, MIKE studies and works through an issue and always approaches the problem with an "I will solve this and make it better" attitude. This approach to problem solving has helped MIKE succeed as chairman of both the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Senate Budget Committee.

Senator ENZI recognizes that if you provide people the tools to succeed, many will. MIKE understands human nature and recognizes that a one size fits all approach to serious problems is not always the best way to fix things. Senator ENZI believes in the ability of people to learn, whether in the classroom, on the job, or through personal experiences, and to take that knowledge and use it in a way to better themselves and others.

The Michael B. Enzi STEM Facility is a perfect reflection of the man: give people an opportunity to learn, to interact, to share, and in an environment that works for them, and they will achieve great things.

In praising his effort to improve education in Wyoming, Chris Boswell, University of Wyoming's vice president for governmental and community affairs, said the following about MIKE ENZI: "He has been very influential in crafting legislation that garners bipartisan support in the Senate. These have been bills that moved significant education initiatives forward. Whether as chairman or ranking member, Senator ENZI knows how to move bills through to become law, and Wyoming and the country are the better for it."

I agree completely, and I congratulate Senator ENZI on this honor.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, on March 15, we commemorated the 25th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the United States and the Republic of Albania. Over 25 years ago, Albania emerged from nearly five decades of isolation and Communist rule to establish a multiparty democracy and forge closer ties with the free world. A quarter century later, Albania has made significant progress. Albania's economy grew and its people participated in elections judged as largely free and fair. Albanians enjoy freedom of religion, movement, unrestricted Internet access, and academic freedom. Today Albania is a NATO ally and a candidate for accession into the European Union, EU.

Since its emergence from isolation, Albania has been an active and contributing member of the international community. Over the course of two decades, Albania deployed more than 6,500 military personnel in support of operations lead by NATO, the EU, and the United Nations. In 2003, Albanian troops deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Between 2002 and 2014, Albania deployed over 3,000 personnel to support U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan. Albanian personnel continue to serve in Afghanistan.

Despite a quarter century of notable strides, pervasive corruption, high unemployment, organized crime, and underrepresentation of women in business and politics, among other issues, prevent Albania from realizing its full potential. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, I have consistently voted to support assistance to Albania to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, promote sustainable economic growth, and assist with its regional and international integration. As co-chair of the Senate Albania Caucus, I will continue to work with my colleagues on to strengthen the U.S.-Albania relationship and support Albania's ongoing efforts to become a prosperous, democratic state and pillar of stability in the Balkans.

HONORING OFFICER JACAI COLSON

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the tragic death of a Marylander. Officer Jacai Colson of the Prince George's Police Department was killed in the line of duty, on Sunday, March 13, 2016. Officer Colson was an upstanding law enforcement officer whose death shocked and saddened so many in Maryland and the national law enforcement community. America is the great Nation it is in no small part because of our respect for the rule of law. Officer Colson and his fellow

Prince George's County police officers put their lives on the line every day to uphold the rule of law.

Officer Colson was only 28 years of age. Today, March 17, 2016, would have been his 29th birthday.

On Sunday, March 13, 2016, the district III station in Prince George's County came under fire in what was a deliberate attack on law enforcement and on the rule of law itself. Officer Colson arrived on the scene. After finding himself in the middle of a firefight, Officer Colson had the composure to return fire. During the firefight, Officer Colson was shot and killed.

Every member of the U.S. Senate, every Marylander, and every American should be inspired by the life of Officer Jacai Colson. Officer Colson was an undercover narcotics agent. He had a dangerous job with zero margin for error. Officer Colson did not make errors. He was a 4-year veteran of the Prince George's Police Department. The commander of the Prince George's County Police Department's narcotic enforcement division said of Officer Colson: "Not only is he good at his job, he's that guy that you wanted on your team." The president of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 89, described Officer Colson as ". . . always the first person here in the morning, ready to work and put in a full day's work."

Officer Colson was a native of Boothwyn, PA. He came from a law enforcement family. His grandfather, Sergeant James G. Colson, Jr., retired from the Delaware County, PA, police department after more than 40 years of service. Officer Colson was the quarterback of his high school football team. He attended Randolph Macon University, where he also played football. He sang in the Ujima Gospel Choir and worked in the admissions office and in the marketing and communications department. Officer Colson gave of himself to improve his community while he was in college. He was a member of Brothers 4 Change, a student organization devoted to community service, and he also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.

I am thankful to the Colson family for sharing such a promising young man with the people of Prince George's County. The pain they are going through right now is a pain no family should have to endure. Most tragically, they are not alone. So far in 2016, 23 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty. In February, two of Officer Colson's Maryland colleagues from the Harford County Sheriff's office, Senior Deputy Mark Logsdon and Senior Deputy Patrick Dailey were killed responding to a call.

The loss of Officer Colson represents the loss of one of the best and brightest among us. He could have done anything with his life, and he chose to protect his fellow Americans. I am thankful that Officer Colson was able to enrich and save the lives of so many people during his life. On behalf of the people of Maryland and my fellow U.S. Senators, I offer my deepest condolences to