

Care Act, Judy was able to afford health insurance. She was able to sleep more easily knowing that she was no longer just one bad illness or accident away from total financial ruin.

I am sorry to report that Bart Ellefritz is leaving my office again next month. He is off on another great challenge. He will be working for CTA, the Chicago Transit Authority, one of the largest transit systems in the world, in one of the greatest cities in the world.

I want to thank Bart publicly for the countless ways in which he has helped me and, more importantly, helped the people of Illinois.

I also want to thank Bart's wife, Ashley, and their son, Charley, who is just 21 months old, for sharing Bart with the people of Illinois.

Bart and Ashley are what some folks in Washington refer to as a mixed marriage.

Ashley Messick was working as assistant secretary of the Senate Republican caucus, helping Senator MCCONNELL run the Senate floor, when she and Bart met.

Bart was sharing a house in Washington with some other young professionals—one of whom happened to be a close friend of Ashley's. They met at the house, and hit it off immediately.

I also want to thank Bart's parents, Keith and Terri Ellefritz, for raising two wonderful sons. Their other son, Bart's brother Ben, is a minister.

Keith and Terri raised their two boys in west central Illinois, in a town called Carthage, population 2,605.

Bart played on his high school football team, the Carthage Blueboys, in 1998, the year they won the State football championship.

Keith and Terri Ellefritz raised their boys to have big hearts and small-town values.

Somewhere along the way, Bart also developed a passion for traveling, meeting new people, and seeing the world through their eyes.

He has visited all seven Wonders of the World.

He took 3 months off after he left the Department of Transportation to hike through sub-Saharan Africa. He ended that trip in Tanzania, where Ashley met up with him and together, they climbed more than 19,000 feet to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

Bart once took his mom skydiving in Australia.

This past October he spent 2 weeks hiking in Ethiopia.

When Charley was born 21 months ago, his parents got him a passport, along with his birth certificate. At 7 months old, Charley got his passport stamped for the first time—for a trip to Colombia, South America.

Bart Ellefritz pours his whole heart into whatever he does, whether he is riding a camel in the desert, spending time with Ashley and Charley, or listening to people of my State and helping to solve problems. And he is almost always smiling.

In closing, I want to thank Bart again for the great skill, caring, and tenacity he has always brought to his job as a member of my staff, and I want to wish him the best of luck as he begins his next professional adventure with CTA in Chicago.

TRIBUTE TO PAUL DETTMAN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after decades of committed service to the important cause of providing public housing for those in need, Paul Dettman is retiring this month as executive director of the Burlington Housing Authority.

Throughout Paul's career, he has worked tirelessly in the field of public service. Public housing has not been a fashionable cause for many years, and our communities have certainly seen the effects of this sometimes forgotten priority. Paul Dettman was never deterred by these attitudes, however, and has been dedicated to finding creative solutions to provide for our most vulnerable friends and neighbors.

Paul's leadership has resulted in a series of public-private partnerships and innovative initiatives have helped revitalize communities across the Green Mountain State. Before joining the Burlington Housing Authority as its executive director in November 1995, Paul served for many years with the Vermont State Housing Authority. It was here that Paul created the State's first lead hazard reduction program, which now stands as a model for providing families of all incomes with safe housing.

Since the beginning of Paul's tenure at Burlington Housing Authority 20 years ago, Vermont's oldest and largest municipally based housing authority, the organization has grown vastly in size and scope. The Burlington Housing Authority has taken on new development projects, improved homebuyer education, and negotiated critical agreements to prevent homelessness in recent years. Under Paul's direction, the Burlington Housing Authority has upheld a strong mission to support all residents, including refugees, those in transition, or in need of long-term supportive services.

Paul's commitment also resulted in a critical partnership with another local organization, Women Helping Battered Women, to create Sophie's Place. Together, these two organizations devised a plan to provide victims of domestic violence easier access to public housing subsidies so that they could move directly from violent homes into safe transitional housing. This solution simultaneously eased suffering, streamlined services, and saved money. This program now functions as a key component of the local economic justice and housing plans and serves as a model for valuable partnerships in my home State. This program is only one of many that I could provide as reference to Paul's great work in Burlington and beyond.

Like his many colleagues and friends, I know that the Burlington Housing Authority and the greater housing community will miss Paul's expertise, spirit, and compassion. Marcelle and I extend our best wishes as Paul begins his retirement after a long and distinguished career. I surely hope that Paul will take time to enjoy one of his greatest hobbies in the years ahead—sugarmaking among the sweet sugarbush.

Paul Dettman's standard of distinction should be an inspiration to others, just as it has been to the city of Burlington and the State of Vermont.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I was unable to vote today on three amendments to the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, H.R. 2028.

Had I been present, I would have voted yes on Senator MERKLEY's amendment No. 3812, to provide additional funding for wind energy projects, and yes on Senator REID's amendment No. 3805, to fund water conservation programs in the Colorado River Basin.

Lastly, I would have voted no on Senator FLAKE's amendment No. 3820, as it decreases funding for Army Corps of Engineers construction projects, which include flood and storm damage reduction, shore protection, and ecosystem restoration projects that are vital to numerous areas in Virginia.●

AMENDMENT NO. 3202 TO THE ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION BILL

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I am very pleased with the Senate's show of support for the Isakson-Bennet amendment, which was a modified version of the Sensible Accounting to Value Energy Act. We have been working on this bill together for more than five years.

The SAVE Act simply creates a voluntary program to encourage people to include energy efficiency in the purchase price of a new or existing home. It allows sellers the option of providing a HUD-qualified energy efficiency report to prospective buyers who are applying for a home mortgage. If that loan is backed by FHA, the energy efficiency of the home and the cost of a borrower's future energy bills will be taken into account by the mortgage lender.

Builders and manufacturers are constantly creating new energy efficient products and features, but the enhanced value and energy savings achieved by these innovations are not fully realized by the market. The passage of this amendment will for the first time provide a mechanism to account for those saving and unlock demand for new energy efficient products

and significantly reduce homeowner's utility bills.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a question?

I would like to commend my colleagues for their support for energy efficiency programs that reduce residential energy consumption. Expanding the use of these technologies in our everyday lives is a commitment to our future and will create jobs in Ohio.

However, I am also concerned that adjusting underwriting or appraisal requirements without sufficient protections to ensure a family has the ability to repay their loan could have unintended consequences that put our housing market at risk, which I know is not the intention of the sponsors.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by the Senator from Ohio. I also support the need for greater energy efficiency and applaud the sponsors of this amendment for promoting greater energy efficiency. At the same time, I do have some concerns.

Specifically, I am concerned about whether and how potential energy savings can safely be incorporated as part of the mortgage underwriting process at the FHA, especially when there may not be a consensus on how to define and accurately quantify future energy savings.

Another concern is the interaction of estimated energy savings in the underwriting and appraisal processes. This could happen because the SAVE Act requires expected energy cost savings to be used as an offset to certain regular expenses, such as property taxes, while also requiring the estimated energy savings of a home to be added to the home's appraisal. While not the intent of the authors, I am concerned that this could tilt the mortgage market towards more expensive products without adequate safeguards to protect borrowers.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we would ask the sponsors of this amendment to work with us to ensure that we can accomplish our shared goals of encouraging investment in energy efficient homes while also maintaining a safe and sound mortgage market for homebuyers.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, moving forward, we intend to work with the Senate Banking Committee and HUD to address any technical or substantive concerns that have arisen. Specifically, it is our intention to ensure that FHA has the ability to insure loans for energy efficient homes while also including protections to maintain accurate evaluations of a borrower's ability to repay.

Additionally, as this amendment is being implemented, we understand that HUD's ability to test and modify the savings that may be counted should be considered. In fact, we considered these concerns while drafting this legislation. The methodology we included for measuring energy efficient savings is an ANSI certified standard and the

most widely accepted technology in today's marketplace. Over 1 million homes have already been energy rated using this technology. And this is the same underlying technology successfully utilized by the EPA's Energy Star program.

Again, we are pleased that the Senate passed our amendment, and we look forward to working with the Banking Committee and HUD on improvements.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am deeply disappointed that my Republican colleagues continue to play politics with our judicial system.

There are currently 79 judicial vacancies in this country—28 of which are judicial emergency vacancies. In each of these districts across the country, Americans are waiting for their cases to be heard, but instead of justice, they are left hanging in the lurch.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Justice delayed is justice denied.

Senate Republicans refuse to act to confirm Judge Merrick Garland—who has more Federal judicial experience than any other Supreme Court candidate in history—to the Supreme Court, and they refuse to act on the 20 judicial nominees who were reported out of the Judiciary Committee by voice vote. It is outrageous that Senate Republicans stubbornly refuse to move these nominations forward, letting these accomplished and qualified nominees languish.

One of those judges is Mark Young, an excellent nominee for the Central District Court of California, which is ranked 11th in the Nation in weighted case filings per judgeship.

We need to fill this seat as soon as possible, and Judge Young is an extraordinary candidate. I was honored to introduce him at his nomination hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee last October and go over his impeccable resume.

He has served as a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge since 2008 and has 10 years of experience as a prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles.

He holds degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California Gould School of Law; and he has won numerous awards from organizations including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award—one of the Department of Justice's highest honors.

The people of the Central District of California need his leadership, and the overworked judges of the Central District need his help.

We also have two additional candidates from California who are awaiting Judiciary Committee hearings.

Judge Paul L. Abrams was nominated by President Obama in December

2015 to serve as the U.S. District Court Judge for the Central District. Judge Abrams is currently a U.S. magistrate judge for the Central District, a post he has held since 2002.

He began his career in private practice and then worked as a legal aid lawyer before serving in the Federal public defender's office, eventually becoming a supervising deputy Federal public defender. He holds degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, and Boalt Hall School of Law.

Judge Lucy Koh, currently serving in the Northern District, was nominated by President Obama for the Ninth Circuit Court in February of this year. The daughter of Korean immigrants and a Harvard graduate, Judge Koh began her legal career as a Women's Law and Public Policy Fellow for the Senate Judiciary Committee.

At the U.S. Department of Justice, she served as a special assistant to the Deputy Attorney General before spending 3 years as a Federal prosecutor in Los Angeles, where she was awarded the Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis J. Freeh Award for Demonstrated Excellence in Prosecuting a Major Criminal Case. She then spent 9 years in private practice. She served on the Superior Court for Santa Clara County until 2010, when she was appointed to the Northern District, becoming the first Korean American woman to serve as a Federal district court judge.

Each of these excellent candidates has flawless credentials, broad support, and they are ready to serve. So what are we waiting for? The American people cannot wait for justice—and they shouldn't have to.

Let's move forward with giving each of these excellent judicial candidates the consideration and vote that they deserve.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RELEASE OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the release of the report by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, better known as the Church Committee.

On this day in 1976, the first of five books detailing egregious abuses of power by the intelligence community was released by the Church Committee. The report was the first ever comprehensive oversight study of the intelligence community, which had operated largely without any oversight since its founding during World War II. Prior to this study, the Intelligence Committees did not exist in either the Senate or the House, and there was no formal apparatus to check the actions of the Nation's intelligence community.

The Church Committee truly was the first of its kind. It grew out of extraordinary circumstances during a period