

operate, and welcome prompt responses to requests for information and willingness to meet with Task Force staff on short notice to provide background and briefing materials. Moreover, Task Force Members emphasize the need for bipartisan cooperation as the Task Force works to arrive at findings and recommendations.

Congressional Support

The Task Force expects to benefit from the support of available congressional support offices, most notably the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the Library of Congress's Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Task Force staff have contacted JCT, which will provide a briefing in the near term to discuss the application of Federal tax policy in Puerto Rico, as well as individual, corporate, and other tax proposals put forward in recent years by stakeholders in Puerto Rico and in Congress. Staff have reached out to CRS researchers for updates on previously-issued CRS reports related to Puerto Rico and have scheduled briefings on a number of germane issues.

Offices and Agencies in Puerto Rico

As noted above, PROMESA specifically requires the Task Force to consult with the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly, the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce, and the private sector of Puerto Rico.

Task Force staff have begun outreach to leaders of the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly, and welcome any input and recommendations that they wish to provide. Task Force staff have also contacted the Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce, and welcome input and recommendations from the Secretary and other officials at the agency. Similarly, Task Force staff have contacted the Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Health to obtain input with respect to the Department's Administrative Order No. 346. Consultation with entities in the private sector of Puerto Rico has also been ongoing and will continue throughout this process.

TRIBUTE TO THE KENTUCKY BANKERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to extend my thanks and congratulations to a venerable Kentucky business trade association that is celebrating a milestone anniversary of service to its members and its customers. The Kentucky Bankers Association, a nonprofit trade association serving Kentucky's community financial services industry, celebrates its 125th anniversary this October.

Founded in October of 1891, the Kentucky Bankers Association, KBA, represents State and federally chartered banks and thrifts. It has 185 member banks, 167 of which are headquartered in Kentucky. Not only do KBA's member banks provide high-quality service to the people of the Commonwealth, but they also employ more than 23,000 Kentuckians.

The purpose of the Kentucky Bankers Association is to provide advocacy for the financial services industry both in Kentucky and on the national level. The organization also serves as a fount of information to its members on the banking industry and acts as a catalyst

for internal debate and action within the industry and among its members. It also publishes an industry magazine to provide news and information to its members. And by providing loans to Kentucky businesses, they enable future business growth and spur the creation of new jobs.

KBA has served its members for 125 years, and many of KBA's member banks have also been serving their customers for a long time. The oldest bank chartered in Kentucky was established in 1835, making it 181 years old. And the average age of Kentucky chartered banks is 84 years old. Kentuckians who bank with KBA's members have counted on and appreciated their high level of service for generations.

I also want to congratulate my friend Ballard Cassady, the president and CEO of KBA, as he has served in that position for 30 years. His dedication to the KBA is equaled only by KBA member banks' dedication to their customers.

Kentucky community banks are integral parts of the local neighborhoods they serve. And the KBA plays a vital role in representing these community financial institutions. I want to extend my gratitude to the KBA, Mr. Cassady, and KBA leadership for 125 years of service to Kentucky's community financial institutions and their consumers. And I wish to thank KBA's member banks across the Commonwealth for their long-standing commitment to the people of Kentucky.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN BEL EDWARDS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I recognize Governor John Bel Edwards, who is celebrating his 50th birthday on September 16, 2016.

Governor Edwards is a committed public servant who has dedicated his career to improving the lives of Louisiana residents. A Louisiana native, Governor Edwards graduated from Amite High School as valedictorian of his class. After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point 4 years later, he bravely served our country as an airborne ranger in the U.S. Army. Following his service, Governor Edwards attended law school at Louisiana State University, where he graduated Order of the Coif, the prestigious honor society for our Nation's brightest law school graduates.

In 2008, Governor Edwards was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives. Throughout his tenure, he worked diligently to ensure that the needs of Louisiana residents were met. His Democratic colleagues recognized his unwavering commitment to public service and his steadfast leadership ability, and they elected him as chairman of the Louisiana House Democratic Caucus.

It comes as no surprise that Governor Edwards has already achieved a number of accomplishments on behalf of Louisiana since he became the Governor of the State in January 2016. He has led State legislators in addressing

Louisiana's most pressing issues, including the State's budget crisis, historic flood events that have damaged more than 100,000 homes throughout the State, and several tornadoes that have impacted many of the State's most vulnerable residents. In addition to managing the response to these crises, Governor Edwards is implementing programs that are critical to the success and well-being of Louisiana residents, such as Medicaid expansion and major infrastructure development projects.

Governor Edwards is married to his high-school sweetheart, Donna Edwards, and they have three beautiful children: Samantha Bel, Sarah Ellen, and John Miller. I join the Governor's family, friends, and the residents of Louisiana in wishing him a very happy 50th birthday. His dedication to Louisiana is commendable, and I look forward learning about his future success on behalf of the residents of Louisiana and all Americans.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2016

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to celebrate the bipartisan passage of this year's Water Resources Development Act. This critically important legislation will help keep our drinking water safe, move goods on Illinois waterways, protect communities from flooding and preserve the precious natural resources that are our rivers, streams, and wetlands.

Our Nation's water infrastructure plays a vital role in protecting our communities from flooding, safeguarding our drinking water from contamination, and advancing commerce through the safe and secure movement of goods. The safety of the American people and the stability of the American economy depend on the reliability of our water infrastructure.

But our water infrastructure in the U.S. is aging and overburdened, and investment is not keeping up with the need. We have locks and dams that are crumbling, in serious need of maintenance and upgrades, and lead water pipes that are long overdue for replacement. What happened in Flint has shown just how vulnerable our water infrastructure is and why investing in it is so important. That is why I was proud to support the passage of the Water Resource and Development Act of 2016, which makes significant investments in water infrastructure around the country.

I am proud to report that much of the water infrastructure funding in this bill will benefit my home State of Illinois. The bill authorizes a final feasibility report on phase II of the Des Plaines River Project, which will provide flood risk management and environmental restoration on the Upper Des Plaines River and tributaries in Illinois and Wisconsin. The bill also includes language that expedites the

completion of the McCook Reservoir in the Chicago region. McCook is a 10-billion-gallon reservoir designed to redirect flood and wastewater from the Chicago region. When completed, the project will benefit Chicago and 36 surrounding suburbs, including 1.5 million structures and over 5 million people. Also included is language that will help pay for work on the Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve and the Prairie Bluff Preserve in Will County. These are important projects for Illinois that will help prevent flooding in our communities and restore our region's ecosystems.

In Illinois, we treasure Lake Michigan, from the drinking water it provides to millions of people, to the commerce and tourism it brings to the Chicago area. That is why protecting and restoring our Great Lakes is so important to Illinois. This bill authorizes \$300 million per year to help protect our Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, or GLRI, which provides Illinois with millions in Federal funding to combat invasive species like Asian carp; reduce and remove pollution, waste runoff, and toxic chemicals; and restore wetlands and other lakefront assets. GLRI funds have been used for restoration projects like the removal of toxic chemicals from Waukegan Harbor, green infrastructure like the Millennium Reserve near the Calumet River, and the restoration of 40 acres of land at North-erly Island.

Finally, this bill takes important steps to address the water contamination issues that have been plaguing communities across the country. Lead water contamination is not a new problem. In Illinois, we have been battling this issue for years. The contaminated water crisis in Flint, MI, was a wakeup call to all of us that we must have strong drinking water protections in place and invest the necessary resources to keep our water safe for our children. This bill provides \$220 million in direct emergency assistance to Flint and other communities facing similar drinking water emergencies. It provides \$1.4 billion over 5 years to help small and disadvantaged communities comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The bill modernizes our State Revolving Loan Fund program and provides \$300 million in grants for communities to replace lead service lines. And because we are also seeing high levels of lead in our schools' water, the bill authorizes \$100 million for additional lead testing in schools. This bill also addresses many of the issues that I raised in the Lead-Safe Housing for Kids Act that I introduced with Senator MENENDEZ and the CLEAR Act that I introduced with Senator CARDIN, two bills that would ensure our children are protected from the dangerous effects of lead in our water and our housing.

Congress has a responsibility to protect the safety of our drinking water, defend our communities from flooding,

improve our waterways, and fix the Nation's crumbling water infrastructure. I want to congratulate Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member BOXER for their hard work and dedication to improving our water infrastructure and for getting this bill passed by the Senate. I am proud to support the important investments that this bipartisan bill makes to improve water infrastructure in Illinois and around the country.

U.S. PARTNERSHIP WITH GEORGIA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, Georgia is a trusted friend and steadfast partner of the United States. I firmly support Georgia's sovereignty, security, and prosperity, and I wish to congratulate Georgians on the remarkable democratic and economic progress they have achieved in 25 years of independence since the fall of the Soviet Union.

I would particularly like to call attention to our unwavering security partnership with Georgia, whose Armed Forces participate in international missions worldwide, including the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, where Georgia is contributing more personnel than any other non-NATO member. I know the United States deeply appreciates Georgia's contributions to these missions and honors its sacrifices.

Our important security relationship with Georgia continues to grow. Through ongoing regional efforts like the European Readiness Initiative and expanded bilateral cooperation, as laid out in the new defense agreement signed in July, the United States and Georgia are working ever more closely to boost our mutual security, build Georgia's resilience and self-defense capabilities, and create a safer region and world. In this context, I remain deeply concerned about Russia's continued occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and believe Russia must fulfill its obligations under the 2008 ceasefire agreement. The United States is steadfast in our support for Georgia's sovereignty and remains committed to helping Georgia achieve its goal of NATO and European Union membership and full integration into European institutions.

Georgia is preparing for parliamentary elections in October, an important test of the country's civic institutions and democratic practices. Georgia's continued democratic maturation depends on free and fair elections contested in a pluralistic media environment. I also believe it is critical for Georgia to sustain progress in enacting its reform agenda, particularly in the justice sector, which will both further strengthen our bilateral partnership and prove to Georgians that their government is working for them. Progress has not come without difficulty, but the commitment of the Georgian people has made Georgia a true standout in a difficult region and an important partner of the United States.

Again, I would like to congratulate Georgia on reaching this significant milestone and recognize the importance of our continued close partnership.

GROWTH AWARENESS

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today, on behalf of every child who suffers from growth disorders, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this week, September 19 through 23, as Growth Awareness Week.

Tracking a child's growth is critical as it is a major sign of his or her overall health. When their growth is delayed, it is an indicator of potential underlying medical disorders. In fact, more than 600 serious diseases and health conditions, ranging from nutritional disturbances and hormone imbalances to unidentified kidney problems and brain tumors, can cause growth failure. Unfortunately, the two most common causes of growth failures frequently go undiagnosed, even in children who are evaluated.

By failing to diagnose the cause of growth failure, the potential for damage and high costs of care increases. By contrast, early detection and diagnosis can ensure a healthy future for children with growth failures. That is why raising public awareness and education about growth failure is so important.

I commend the MAGIC Foundation for their great work and look forward to working with my colleagues to improve the lives and health of children in Illinois and across the country.

NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION WEEK

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize America's professional truck drivers who serve our Nation by safely delivering such vital goods as the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and the medicine we rely on.

This week, September 11 through 17, is designated as National Truck Driver Appreciation Week to honor the 3.5 million professional truck drivers in the United States. According to the American Trucking Associations, the trucking industry employs more than 7 million people, making it not only essential to our economy, but also one of our country's largest employers.

In Nebraska, the trucking industry employs nearly 63,000 men and women who safely deliver essential goods from Scottsbluff to Lincoln and everywhere in between.

Trucking is a major driver of our economy, responsible for nearly 70 percent of the total U.S. freight tonnage. More than 80 percent of communities rely solely on the trucking industry for their goods and commodities.

America's truck drivers are dedicated to keeping our highways safe. They follow stringent safety regulations, attend frequent training programs, and educate the motoring public to help them drive safely around tractor-trailers.