

or stolen, and witnesses being intimidated and killed, securing the evidence in this case is imperative.

The Honduran Government should take whatever steps are necessary to protect the leaders of COPINH, whose lives remain in jeopardy. The government's past responses to requests for protection have ranged from inaction to ineffective.

The Agua Zarca concession and other hydro or extractive concessions that were obtained without the consent of local people whose lives or territory would be adversely affected should be cancelled. The Honduran Government needs to substantially reform the way it reviews and grants such concessions, which have too often been the product of corrupt dealings that resulted in environmental degradation, social unrest, and violence.

The assassination of Berta Caceres, as outrageous and tragic as it was, presented the Honduran Government with an opportunity to show that justice is possible in such cases and that even people who hold positions of economic or political privilege and power can be held accountable. Instead, we have witnessed more of the same—important evidence being mishandled and possibly even ignored and withheld from those entitled to it. A partial investigation that resulted in the arrest of those who reportedly carried out the crime, followed by months of silence without identifying those who were behind it. This is not acceptable.

Over the past 2 years, President Hernandez and other top Honduran officials have traveled to Washington to lobby for Honduras's share of U.S. funding for the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity of the Northern Triangle of Central America. Among other things, they have earnestly voiced their commitment to human rights and respect for civil society. They are going to find out that action, not words, are what matter.

Over the past 2 years, the U.S. Congress has provided a total of \$1.4 billion to support the plan, of which a significant portion is for Honduras. I supported those funds because I recognize the immense challenges that widespread poverty, corruption, drug trafficking, gang violence, and impunity pose for those countries. These problems will not be solved by building a wall along our southern border or deporting tens of thousands of Central Americans currently living in the United States.

I mention this because the assassination of Berta Caceres brings U.S. support for the plan sharply into focus. Today that support is in jeopardy.

It is why those responsible for her death and the killers of other Honduran social activists and journalists must be brought to justice.

It is why Agua Zarca and other such projects that do not have the support of the local population must be abandoned and replaced with an inclusive, transparent process that complies with

international environmental and social safeguards.

It is why the Honduran Government must cease its attempts to undermine the work of the Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, MACCIH, which has begun to investigate the link between the assassination of Berta Caceres and corrupt dealings between DESA and Honduran state agents.

It is why the Honduran Government must finally take seriously its responsibility to protect the rights of journalists, human rights defenders, other social activists, COPINH, and civil society organizations that peacefully advocate for equitable economic development and access to justice.

Only then should we have confidence that the Honduran Government is a partner the United States can work with in addressing the needs and protecting the rights of the Honduran people, particularly those who have borne the brunt of official neglect, corruption, and violence for so many years.

Today any hope that the Honduran Government may have of continued U.S. assistance under the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity will hinge in part on the outcome of the Caceres case, concrete actions that demonstrate support for the legitimate role of civil society and the independent media, and real reform of the justice system.

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

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 268, on the nomination of William L. Wehrum, of Delaware, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 269, on the motion to invoke cloture on Derek Kan, of California, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.●

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 253 on October 30, 2017, on the confirmation of Trevor N. McFadden to be U.S. district judge for the District of Columbia. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 254 on October 30, 2017, on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to be U.S. circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 255 on October 31, 2017, on the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to be U.S. circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 256 on October 31, 2017, on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Joan Louise Larsen to be U.S. circuit judge for the Sixth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 257 on November 1, 2017, on the confirmation of Joan Louise Larsen to be U.S. circuit judge for the Sixth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 258 on November 1, 2017, on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Allison H. Eid to be U.S. circuit judge for the Tenth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 259 on November 2, 2017, on the confirmation of Allison H. Eid to be U.S. circuit judge for the Tenth Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 260 on November 2, 2017, on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Stephanos Bibas to be U.S. circuit judge for the Third Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 261 on November 2, 2017, on the confirmation of Stephanos Bibas to be U.S. circuit judge for the Third Circuit. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

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

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent due to a family funeral for the votes on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 407 and the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 159.

On vote No. 268, had I been present, I would have voted nay on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 407.

On vote No. 269, had I been present, I would have voted yea on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 159.●

#### VETERANS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Saturday is Veterans Day. On this 11th day of the 11th month each year, we pause to honor and pay tribute to our veterans and the countless sacrifices they have made to serve our country. We also honor their families, who have endured extended absences and profound personal challenges as they have watched those most precious to them put themselves in harm's way. In that spirit of gratitude, I want to recognize some of Maryland's bravest and finest servicemembers who have given the last full measure of devotion to our Nation.

Sgt. Eric M. Houck, 25, died from gunshot wounds in the Peka Valley of

the Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan this past June. Sergeant Houck, who began his military career as a private and rose to the rank of sergeant in just 3 years, was an avid sports fan. His father called Eric his best friend and said that his family, particularly his two young children, were everything to him. He was only 1 month shy of returning home.

Navy PO1 Xavier Martin, age 24, died aboard the USS *Fitzgerald* during its tragic collision off the coast of Japan in June. Petty Officer Martin was an exemplary sailor and the youngest petty officer with a rank of first class aboard the USS *Fitzgerald*. He was so well-loved, more than 100 friends and family traveled from around the country and the globe to attend his funeral.

U.S. Air Force pilot and Annapolis native Eric Schultz was killed in an aircraft crash in early September. Lieutenant Colonel Schultz was a combat veteran and an exceptionally talented Air Force test pilot with more than 2,000 hours of flying. He held six degrees, including a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering, but was described by friends and family as the most humble man they have ever known. "If you met him in a social environment, you would never know he was a Ph.D. or a pilot," his father said.

Timothy Eckels and Kevin Bushell were among the sailors killed during the collision of the USS *John McCain* in August. Information System Technician 2nd Class Eckels was a graduate of Manchester Valley High School and was described as being "known for making everyone better by his presence" and a true pleasure to be around. He was just 23 years old. Electronics Technician 2nd Class Bushell was not much older, at only 26, and a talented technician for the Navy. He proudly served for 7 years.

There are many other Marylanders, many other families, who have suffered unfathomable loss and injury, and all of them deserve our collective and eternal gratitude.

They also deserve to have the many promises we have made kept. They deserve the job training, education assistance, and housing benefits they have earned. They deserve every tool and resource they need to succeed both professionally and personally once they return home. They deserve leaders who consider their sacrifice every day, not only on Veterans Day.

Let us honor our veterans in ways that are truly befitting their service: by vowing to protect the benefits they have earned. By pledging to remain grateful for their service and concerned for their needs every day, not only on this day and, perhaps most critically of all, by recommitting ourselves to the causes for which they served.

Today, I salute every man and woman who has put on a uniform and humbly thank every one of their families for braving the worst fears and the toughest challenges in service to our Nation.

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

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the prisoners of war and those missing in action and commemorate the empty chair that was placed in Emancipation Hall this Veterans Day week.

I want to thank Montana veteran Ed Saunders for contributing his thoughts to today's CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

The greatest tragedy befalling an American serviceman or woman is not that they may be killed or left missing-in-action: that is the greatest sacrifice on the altar of freedom.

The greatest tragedy is that America's finest in uniform may be forgotten . . . forgotten in life and in forgotten in death by the very same nation whose constitution, freedoms, and way of life, they defend.

The United States of America cannot and must not leave any serviceman or woman behind in body, in spirit, or in memory.

If we cannot bring home the revered mortal remains of those who died, who are missing, or who remain unaccounted for, then we have an enduring responsibility to ensure their memory remains forever etched in these hallowed halls.

This chair is more than a symbol. It is a memory of their service and sacrifice for this great Nation. It is a lasting reminder that we have an obligation to fulfill our promise to our Nation's veterans and their families when they return from war—and when they tragically don't.

We, as a nation, must redouble our commitment to that cause and work relentlessly every day toward fulfilling that promise.

I want to thank every servicemember in attendance, your families, the families of the fallen and missing in action, and those who remember them.

Thank you, and God Bless America. •

#### EISENHOWER MEMORIAL GROUNDBREAKING

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remarks that my colleague, Senator PAT ROBERTS, made at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Eisenhower Memorial on November 2, 2017, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### REMARKS BY SENATOR ROBERTS—EISENHOWER MEMORIAL GROUNDBREAKING

Thank you, Greta, for that kind introduction. And thank you so much for your longstanding support of this project. You have been a true soldier in the Eisenhower memorial army in helping to get us here today.

I know I speak for all gathered for this memorable event, when I say it is great to be here today.

First, let us reflect for a moment about a few members of the Greatest Generation who brought us to this place today. Ted Stevens and Dan Inouye—two giants in the Senate, who authored the legislation to create the Eisenhower memorial.

When Ted and Danny started us down this path, it was both an honor and privilege for me, a new senator from Kansas, to be asked

to help memorialize our most famous Kansan, Dwight David Eisenhower.

Then there is our Chairman Emeritus, Rocco Siciliano, another WWII veteran. For over a decade, Rocco led our efforts. He did so with the qualities that made him successful in government and the private sector: integrity and inclusion.

When Rocco called me and said it was time to pass the leadership torch—and would I agree to succeed him as Chairman? I said, it would be an honor, but there was a qualification:

I called another World War II vet, a great American who fought for our country on the battlefield, in the House, in the Senate, and on the campaign trail as our Republican nominee for president, another really great Kansan, Bob Dole, who also played a key role in making the World War II Memorial a reality.

I said, "Bob, I can't do this without you." And as he has always done when his country called, he said, "Pat, Ike is my hero: I'm in."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not sure we would be standing here today without the support of Bob Dole who stepped in as Finance Chairman of the memorial. He called all the former Presidents and Vice Presidents, and asked them to come on board. And not one of them said, "No."

We were hoping Bob could join us today, he is watching on C-Span, but please join me in thanking him for his lifelong commitment and service to our nation and to this project. Bob, thank you.

And I know we would not be standing here today without the support and vision of the Eisenhower family. Their commitment to making sure this memorial appropriately captured their grandfather, as both General and President, has ensured generations of Americans will know his legacy.

Being an Eisenhower fan is something of a tradition in the Roberts family. In 1952, when I was just fifteen years old, I was with my dad, Wes Roberts, at the Republican National Convention in Chicago. I watched Ike receive the nomination on the first ballot to be our party's candidate for President of the United States.

Later, during his inauguration, I met President Eisenhower. When he entered the room, whether you immediately saw him or not, everyone knew it—with that ruddy face and great smile. He had that special charisma.

And when I shook his hand that day, I never dreamed I would be here this day leading the effort for his memorial on the National Mall.

After all these years, Why do we "Still Like Ike?" If he had done nothing else in life, his service as Supreme Allied Commander, savior of western democracy, should earn him the respect and admiration of every human being whose life, peace and prosperity that victory made possible.

But it isn't just the magnitude of his service that we revere. It is the manner in which he served. The quiet humility. The strength and resolve. The man was so humble that upon the surrender of the German Army, his message back to Washington simply said, "Mission Accomplished."

Ike may not have coined the phrase, "speak softly and carry a big stick" but he did embody it. It was not necessary for him to raise his voice or wave his arms to project strength. Those were the tactics of his adversaries.

He spoke quietly. He did not make idle threats. Yet, when he did speak the force of his words was clear.

The story of Dwight David Eisenhower is the story of America. His ascendancy parallels America's. At the end of the 19th century, Eisenhower was still a young man in