

entrepreneurship. As Pastor Harris often says, “The best violence prevention program is access to good schools and good jobs,” the kinds of jobs you can raise a family on.

Bright Star also offers counseling and other forms of support to help heal from the trauma that is often at the root—not only of gun violence but also addiction and so many other deadly ills. And he has been at the forefront of this field, being involved in Federal grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Over the years, Bright Star Community Outreach has grown from Pastor Harris and a few volunteers to now 115 employees. They are working directly with Chicago Public School students to understand their needs and experiences. I have visited their programs many times, and I am always inspired by the work they do.

And when I set out to introduce legislation to address the role that trauma plays in fueling our cycle of violence, Pastor Harris was one of my first calls. His guidance helped shape the legislation I have worked on for nearly a decade, parts of which have become law and are funding school mental health efforts in Chicago.

Recently, Pastor Harris decided to step back as executive director. He will remain CEO of BSCO, and he will have a bit more time to focus more on his many other duties. The new executive director of Bright Star Community Outreach is LaKreisha Kindred. She is a lifelong Chicagoan with a background in the financial industry—and a member of the famed Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. I wish her well. And I want to say to my friend Pastor Chris Harris, thank you for your unflagging efforts to save lives and bring new hope to the city of Chicago.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I missed a vote on December 18, 2023. Had I been present, I would have voted *yea* on rollcall vote No. 347 to confirm Martin O'Malley to serve as Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

I congratulate Commissioner O'Malley on his confirmation, and I look forward to his strong leadership at the SSA.

REMEMBERING FRANK Q. NEBEKER

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, today I would like to honor the life and service of a dedicated public servant, distinguished American, and champion for veterans: the Honorable Frank Q. Nebeker.

Judge Nebeker served as the first chief judge of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, now known as the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. A long-time Federal judge and legal pioneer, he established the landmark court in 1988 before hearing the first

case and issuing the first opinion in 1989. His work ensured that, for the first time ever, veterans had a dedicated court to hear their appeals for their earned Department of Veterans Affairs—VA—benefits.

While Judge Nebeker is no longer with us, his legacy lives on. On behalf of myself and my fellow Americans, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude for his life and service to this nation.

Judge Nebeker grew up in the West. He was born in Salt Lake City and grew up in Ogden, UT, before graduating from the University of Utah and marrying his wife Lou. Together, they moved to Washington, DC, where he studied law and worked in President Eisenhower's White House. Working as a correspondence secretary, he began his career in public service that would last the rest of his life.

After serving as an attorney for the Department of Justice, he was appointed to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in 1969. He presided on that bench until President Reagan nominated him to be the Director of the Office of Government Ethics in 1987, a position he held for 2 years.

Soon after, Judge Nebeker continued his service to this country when President George H.W. Bush appointed him to be the chief judge of the newly created United States Court of Veterans Appeals. In this role, he was tasked with standing up this new court from the bottom up.

Judge Nebeker's sharp legal mind and unpretentious demeanor made him an ideal person to bring the court to life. He, along with many other dedicated individuals who established the court, provided an opportunity for the men and women who served our country to appeal for the VA benefits they earned for the first time ever. Many veterans live a better life today because of the judicial system Frank helped establish.

He oversaw the court until his retirement in 2000 and served in senior status on the District of Columbia Court of Appeals until 2021. While he left the court, his enduring legacy of serving veterans lived on at the U.S. Court of Appeals, where the Veterans Appeals courtroom is named in his honor.

On January 4, 2024, Judge Nebeker passed away at the age of 93 years old. He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Lou, his children Melia and William, three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

It is my honor to recognize Judge Nebeker's decades of public service and commitment to serving our veterans and their families. His work will continue to benefit generations of veterans nationwide for years to come, and he will be sorely missed.

REMEMBERING FRANK Q. NEBEKER

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, today, I want to honor the life and

mourn the loss of Judge Frank Nebeker, who was not only the first judge of the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims but also the court's first chief judge. In Kansas, we know the value of community and helping others, and Judge Nebeker took these traits to heart as a dedicated and long-serving public servant for more than 70 years.

He began his legal career in 1956 as a trial attorney in the Internal Security Division of the Department of Justice. From there, he took on multiple jobs and roles within the executive and judicial branches of government. In October 1989, he was nominated to the Court of Veterans Appeals by President George H. W. Bush.

The court was created in 1988 under President Reagan to allow veterans and their families to appeal benefits decisions from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Board of Veterans Appeals. This court was the first of its kind and provided a forum for veterans and their dependents to advocate for themselves when they disagreed with VA. It currently consists of seven permanent judges and two temporary judges.

Judge Nebeker served on the court from the first day it opened until November 2000, when he then became a “Recall-Eligible Senior Judge.” He still continued his public service to veterans and periodically performed recall service until December 2022, when he fully retired from the court.

Judge Nebeker was a powerful and influential advocate for veterans. He lived a life of purpose and loved bettering the lives of those who have sacrificed for our country. He often held education programs for attorneys and appellate judges throughout the country in his pursuit to improve the lives of veterans and military families through the next generation of public servants.

He is an example for each of us to follow as we seek to care for our veterans. I know his legacy will live on in the court and in the community and people he loved. My prayers are with his family, friends, and colleagues.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate, by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.