“Please join me in wishing Tracy and Don the very best in their retirement and much success and enjoyment in the endeavors that lie ahead.”

Marcelle and I appreciate all she has done and also send Tracy and Don our best wishes.

RECOGNIZING DARN TOUGH VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, veterans make a valuable addition to any workplace. Vermont companies know this, which is why most employers in the State do their best to recruit former servicemembers. But some go far beyond others in their commitment to employing veterans. Darn Tough Vermont is one such company. Since the Darn Tough brand was created in 2004, consumer interest in the company’s famous socks has steadily grown. This is because of the dependability and durability their products are known for. But the nearly 500 employees at Darn Tough, a disproportionately high amount of which are veterans, are what ensures this reputation.

Darn Tough has always been committed to hiring veterans whenever possible. As a trusted supplier of the military, the company understands why it is former servicemembers stand apart from others when it comes to reliability, team orientation, and performing under stress. They know that hiring a veteran is not only a good thing to do; it is an excellent investment for an employer to make. This is why more than 7 percent of employees hired by Darn Tough over the last calendar year were veterans.

In November, the U.S. Department of Labor recognized Darn Tough for its commitment to hiring veterans by awarding the company the 2022 Hire Vets Medallion “gold tier” Award. The award is given to a company who can show that 7 percent of the people it hired in a calendar year are veterans. It can also be awarded to companies who retain more than 75 percent of their annual veteran hires for 12 months or more. Darn Tough exceeded the Labor Department’s award criteria in both of these areas. Meeting these benchmarks is doubly impressive, considering veterans make up only 4.7 percent of the U.S. Department of Labor’s 2022 veteran hires for 12 months or more.

The Darn Tough brand was created in Vermont. It is given to a company who can show why it is former servicemembers stand apart from others when it comes to reliability, team orientation, and performing under stress. Why wouldn’t someone want to hire them?”

Forsyth says he goes four times a year to a recruiting event at Fort Drum in New York to persuade people leaving the military, as well as veterans, to move to Vermont. He said he works in partnership with the Vermont State Police, the Vermont National Guard and the Vermont Air National Guard to recruit people leaving active-duty military service.

Forsyth encourages businesses interested in attracting people leaving the armed services to visit the website for Skillbridge, a U.S. Department of Defense program that pays for internships for up to 160 days, which “could turn into a full-time job,” he said. He said he has placed five veterans through that program in the past two years.

One way Darn Tough retains the veterans it hires is by identifying the skills they bring from their military service, said Jennifer No, the company’s talent acquisition recruiter. “What we do internally is we continue to build on those skills and develop them to positions like the (chief technology officer),” she said.

Businesses could also earn the “gold” award by retaining 75 percent of the veterans they hired in a calendar year for 12 months or more. With Darn Tough excelling in retention, in addition to recruiting, they meet both of these benchmarks.

There being no objection, the matter was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From VT Digger]

DARN TOUGH VERMONT, THE NORTHFIELD SOCK MANUFACTURER, IS GETTING RECOGNITION FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO HIRING AND RETAINING MILITARY VETERANS

“It’s just good to be around more people that are veterans,” said Jim Decker, chief technology officer at Darn Tough. Decker, who has worked for the company since 2019, served in the U.S. Army from 1985 to 1989. He joined Darn Tough in 2019, when the company employed 565 people. The company has experienced explosive growth in the last three years, and it employs nearly 700 people now, he said.

Last month, Darn Tough was awarded a 2022 Hire Vets Medallion Award from the U.S. Labor Department. Darn Tough is the only Vermont company to have earned the award in the four years that it has been presented.

The awards are based on the percentage of workers hired and retained who are military veterans. To earn the “gold” tier award, the company had to show that 7% of the people it hired in a calendar year were veterans.

And that’s a hard mark to make, because the overall national percentage of veterans is 5.4%,” said Randall Smith, director of the Labor Department’s Hire Vets Medallion program. In Vermont, that’s accounted for 4.7% of the civilian labor force, Smith said.

One goal of the award, Smith said, is to let veterans know about companies that do an especially good job of hiring and retaining veterans. The program posts a map of award recipients.

Lawrence Forsyth, veterans services coordinator at the Vermont Department of Labor, estimated that Vermont has about 40,000 veterans, including many of them older veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

He said the small number of veterans in Vermont, compounded by the fact that it does not have an active military post, makes it hard for employers to hire veterans. However, veterans are “adaptive. They’re resilient. They’re very team-oriented and they perform under stress. Why wouldn’t someone want to hire them?”

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TRIBUTE TO JANET GREEN-TUCKER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize an important person who is critical to the functioning of the U.S. Senate and, more importantly, who has been an important part of the lives of many young Senate families for over three decades.

Janet Green-Tucker, affectionately known as Ms. Janet, will be retiring at the end of this month after 36 years of service as a teacher at the Senate Employees Child Care Center. Having joined the center just a few short years after its opening on February 27, 1984, Janet personified the sense of warmth, skill, patience, and community that are well known to the Senate families. We have all had teachers who touched our lives, prompting guidance during difficult times or sparking our imaginations. Janet has done so for hundreds of children over the years, nourishing young minds at a critical time in their development. She was a lighthouse, an encyclopedia for all families. In fact, at least one of Janet’s former students is now a parent herself, making her a “grandteacher!”

For many years she was one-half of the “Green Team,” alongside fellow teacher Phyllis Green, who also retired earlier this year after an impactful decades long career at the center.

Janet is especially beloved by many families on my staff whose children had the privilege of being taught by her: Rayn, Leo, Alex, William, Avery, and Harry. Even children who weren’t in her class could always count on a comforting hug in the hallway from Janet. Janet is also adored by her colleagues. She was always willing to go above and beyond, to support fellow teachers new and old, and take care of monthly playground inspections, and lend a hand throughout the center no matter the task. And as an avid baker, Janet’s colleagues were more than happy to taste her latest treats and would fight for the last crumb.

During the past 36 years, Janet also raised twin boys of her own, Jarrod and Jaron, alongside her husband Marvin, and is now looking forward to spending time with her grandchildren. In 2014, Senator Tom Harkin aptly described the teachers new and old who work at the Senate Employees Child Care Center as the “unsung heroes” of the Senate. It is my privilege to sing the praises of Janet as one of those unsung heroes.

I wish her all the best as she embarks on a well-earned retirement.

JOINT EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, this explanation reflects the status of negotiations and the issues reached between the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence for the National Security Systems and the Intelligence Community Experts Panel on Anomalous Health Incidents.

The Committees are committed to providing resources to the congressional intelligence committees, within 180 days of the enactment of the Act, to retain and promote opportunities for women and minorities for promotions in the intelligence community.

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The Committees further direct that the report shall include, with respect to GS-14 and GS-15 positions, tables of figures that break down by race and gender the information:

(1) The total number, and the percentage, of Special Agents who applied for such positions;

(2) The total number, and the percentage, of Special Agents who were interviewed for such positions;

(3) The total number, and the percentage, of Special Agents who were selected for such positions;

(4) The number of times a Special Agent was selected for such position before selection.

For purposes of this direction, the term “special operations” means Special Agent positions, the report shall include tables of figures that break down by race and gender the following information:

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(2) The total number, and the percentage, of Special Agents who were interviewed for such positions;

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women and minorities for promotions across all mission categories of the IC, and to reduce the gap among gender, racial, and ethnic categories at senior levels of the IC. The report shall contain a strategic plan from each element of the IC on the following:

1. Overcoming any barriers or obstacles identified in the report;
2. Developing new or enhanced mentoring programs or similar workplace forums to support women and minority officers of the IC who are interested in or may qualify for promotion opportunities or other career advancements;
3. Recommending additional steps and initiatives to achieve diversity among senior roles in the IC and to create a more diverse workforce, and production, relative to those of other countries;
4. United States competitiveness in technology and innovation sectors critical to national security and economic prosperity relative to other countries, including the availability and adoption of United States technology in such sectors abroad;
5. Trends and trajectories, including rate of change in technologies, related to technology and innovation critical to national security and economic prosperity;
6. Threats to United States national security interests as a result of any foreign country’s deployment of strategic competitors of the United States; and
7. Threats to United States interests based on dependencies on foreign technologies critical to national security and economic prosperity.

The priorities of the Office should be established in coordination with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and such other officials as the President considers appropriate.

In carrying out the activities of the Office, the Committees expect:

1. The Office will solicit input on technology and economic trends, data, and metrics from relevant private sector stakeholders, including entities involved in enhancing technology development and commercialization, and engage with academia to inform the analyses.
2. The Office will acquire, access, use, and handle data or information in a manner consistent with applicable provisions of law and policy, including laws and policies providing for the protection of privacy and civil liberties, and subject to any restrictions required by the source of the information.
3. The Office will provide access, upon written request, to all information, data, or reports of any Executive agency that the Office determines necessary to carry out its activities, to include commercially available information that may not be publicly available; and
4. Consistent with applicable law, the heads of departments or agencies within the Executive will detail personnel to the Office in order to assist the Office in its activities.

The Committees direct the President to submit the report on the administrative structure of the Office, as well as a detailed spending plan that includes administrative costs.

OFFICE OF GLOBAL COMPETITION ANALYSIS

The Committees encourage the President to establish an Office of Global Competition Analysis ("the Office") to conduct analysis relevant to United States leadership in science, technology, and innovation sectors critical to national security and economic prosperity relative to other countries, and to support policy development and decision making across the federal government to ensure the United States retains leadership in science, technology, and innovation sectors critical to national security and economic prosperity relative to other countries, particularly those countries that are strategic competitors of the United States.

The analysis conducted by the Office should cover:

1. United States policies that enable technological competitiveness relative to those of other countries, particularly with respect to countries that are strategic competitors of the United States;
2. United States science and technology ecosystem elements, including regional and national research and development capacity, technology innovation, science and engineering education and research workforce relative to those of other countries;
3. United States technology development, commercialization of and advanced manufacturing ecosystem elements, including supply chain resiliency, scale-up manufacturing testbeds, access to venture capital and financial incentives, technical and research workforce, and production, relative to those of other countries;
4. United States competitiveness in technology and innovation sectors critical to national security and economic prosperity relative to other countries, including the availability and adoption of United States technology in such sectors abroad;
5. Trends and trajectories, including rate of change in technologies, related to technology and innovation critical to national security and economic prosperity;
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VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 1109, Candace A. Bailey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 1109, Shefali Razdan Duggal, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to recognize Lt. Col. Jeffrey "Slander" Entine, who worked in my Senate office for the past year as a defense fellow. Lieutenant Colonel Entine is a patriot who has served our country nobly and made it a safer and better place. It has truly been a pleasure to have him in my office.

Lieutenant Colonel Entine graduated from Florida State University in 2006. After graduation, he commissioned as a second lieutenant and set off for pilot training in Mississippi. Lieutenant Colonel Entine stood out early during pilot training. Not only was he the distinguished graduate of his class, but he was also the best rated student pilot with the highest academic grade in his class.

Later, Lieutenant Colonel Entine deployed for 6 months to Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, flying F-16s. He flew 63 combat missions, earned three Air Medals, and was named the outstanding performer of the 480th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron’s deployment.

He then went through the crucible of Weapons School, which forges promising airmen into leaders and tactical experts. Again, he distinguished himself in this challenging environment. When Lieutenant Colonel Entine graduated from Weapons School in December 2016, he became the chief of weapons and tactics in the 55th Fighter Squadron at Shaw Air Force Base. Shortly after arriving, he overhauled the base’s training program. His boss said the new plan was “the best he’s ever seen” and rated him first out of the 27 company-grade officers in the squadron.

In October 2017, Lieutenant Colonel Entine shipped off to Afghanistan again—this time to Bagram Airfield, not far from Kabul. He deployed as the wing weapons officer, where he advised the operations group commander and wing commander on tactics. He also worked with special operations forces conducting raids across the country. On one such raid in April 2018, Lieutenant Colonel Entine coordinated with two formations of F-16s, two AC-130s, three MQ-9 drones, and a ground controller who was on his very first combat mission during a day-long firefight with ISIS-K fighters. Lieutenant Colonel Entine employed weapons six times during the battle, three times within dangerous-close distances and twice dropped bombs just 30 meters from friendly troops. Thanks to his heroic efforts, no Americans were safely evacuated, and scores of enemy fighters were killed. And that was just one combat sortie out of the more than