

**EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC'S
RIGHT TO KNOW**

the supply of wild horses in line with the more limited number of homes available to them.

S. 1579 and H.R. 1018 also provide BLM managers with enhanced management tools and greater emphasis on emerging medical controls like long-term contraception to help keep herd sizes proportionate to the available grazing. It also puts greater emphasis on the adoption program by encouraging greater involvement from private, not-for-profit organizations that specialize in equine adoption and therapy programs.

Most Americans value our Nation's great Western heritage. Our idea of the wild, wild West is synonymous with wild horses thundering through great open spaces. Our images of dusty, scruffy prospectors are not complete without the requisite patient burro at his side. A hundred years ago, 2 million wild horses lived on the range—now, there are fewer than 35,000. We want to preserve our wild herds and to keep them forever wild. We can achieve that goal, but we need to provide BLM and the Forest Service with a more robust toolkit for long-term sustainable herd management.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 1579 and move to ensure the long-term future of America's wild horses and burros.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK STRATTON

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful Alabamian and American, LTC Mark Stratton, 39, of Foley, AL, who was killed in Afghanistan on Memorial Day this year and laid to rest among the heroes at Arlington National Cemetery in June. Lieutenant Colonel Stratton was serving as commander of a Provincial Reconstruction Team, PRT, and was killed when an improvised explosive device, IED, detonated as his convoy was passing.

Having had the privilege of attending Lieutenant Colonel Stratton's funeral and hearing the stories told by his family members and those who had worked with him, it is clear that Lieutenant Colonel Stratton was a man of honor who took great pride in his service to our Nation.

In my conversations with his mother, Mrs. Jan York, she described her son as "good, determined, focused and he loved God, he loved America and loved the Air Force. He accomplished so much." She also described how proud he was, as a leader of his PRT, to have completed an important road project. He was proud because he knew it was a project of permanence that would benefit the lives of the people of the area. This is so typical of the patriotic selfless attitude of our magnificent military personnel.

His colleague and friend, Lieutenant Colonel Risner said of him, "He put the airmen that he was supervising or leading first, every step of the way." This

is the sign of a true leader who was dedicated both to the mission and to the development of his subordinates.

In admiration of his committed service and ultimate sacrifice, his colleagues on the Joint Staff in the Pentagon will pay tribute to him later this month by naming a conference room in his honor. I believe that it is a fitting homage to an individual who represented the best of what an airman and officer should be. It is good that our military leaders in the Pentagon will remember the sacrifice this great American made for his country and strive to honor his commitment in the way our military operations are carried out.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife Jennifer; their three young children Delaney, Jake, and A.J.; his mother Jan York and her husband Buddy; his brothers, Michael Stratton and Frankie Little; as well as his many friends and fellow warriors as they continue to grieve the loss of this great man. This is an incalculable loss for them, but I know that they will be able to take wonderful lessons from the way he lead his life both publicly and privately. They will also be able to take comfort from the great heritage he leaves to his family and to his Nation.

**TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MEL
MARTINEZ**

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to speak about my friend and colleague, Mel Martinez, who is leaving the Senate this week.

Senator Martinez has a story unlike that of any of us who serve in this body. He came to this country from Cuba without his parents at age 15 as part of a humanitarian effort. And as the first Cuban-American Senator, he has always maintained a thoughtful and unique perspective on Cuba policy, one that I have always enjoyed hearing and considering.

As chairman of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, I was pleased to have Senator Martinez as part of that panel. It is not often you get a Secretary of Housing and Urban Development sharing his expertise in a Senate committee. He worked tirelessly to address the crisis of homelessness, and I have been proud to work alongside him on some of the housing measures we have passed over the past couple of years. He has been enormously helpful and cooperative as a member of my committee, and we will miss his perspective.

Senator Martinez and I didn't agree on every issue, or even most issues. What we shared was a deep love for this amazing country, a deep respect for this institution, and a strong working relationship. Wherever Senator Martinez's remarkable life takes him next, I know that the citizens of his beloved Florida are grateful for his service and will join me in wishing him and his family nothing but the best.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if information is power, then an informed public is certainly an ingredient that helps make government work better and more responsively for the people.

I have always had a keen interest in technology and the Internet, so it has been encouraging to see the commitment and skill that the Obama administration has invested in applying information technology to the functions of government. One of the clearest examples of this has been in the innovative release of data about funds appropriated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—the so-called economic stimulus package. It is all the more encouraging to see the way these efforts have spawned complementary initiatives by private foundations and entrepreneurs.

As a Vermonter I am especially proud that a project called ThisWeKnow.org became a top-three finalist in the Apps for America 2: The Data.gov Challenge, sponsored by The Sunlight Foundation, which asked contestants to produce Web applications to showcase the benefits of sharing Federal Government data with the public. ThisWeKnow.org, along with the other two finalists, showcased their Web sites this week in the Nation's Capital, at the Gov 2.0 Expo Showcase.

ThisWeKnow.org was selected as one of the three finalists out of 47 applications submitted. ThisWeKnow.org was built by GreenRiver.org and Intellidimension of Brattleboro, VT, to empower citizens to enter in their locations and to explore data related to their communities from across Federal agencies. Their site offers citizens one-stop shopping for information available to them about their own towns, States and communities.

The public's right to know is a cornerstone of our democracy. By using technology, a site such as this can provide citizens with access to data that is relevant to them and that can enable and encourage them to make informed decisions. This site is designed to make what was once a difficult and time-consuming process into a faster and more streamlined experience.

ThisWeKnow.org was designed and developed by Michael Knapp, managing director of GreenRiver.org, and Derrish Repchick, vice president of Product Development at Intellidimension, who are in Washington to attend the Gov 2.0 events this week. Although they did not win the grand prize, we congratulate them for all of their hard work and their public spirit, and encourage them to continue their efforts to promote a more accessible and open government.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of a September 8 article from The Brattleboro Reformer be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Brattleboro Reformer, Sept. 8, 2009]

YOUR GOVERNMENT, ONLINE!
(By Howard Weiss-Tisman)

BRATTLEBORO.—Michael Knapp thinks the government can do a better job of getting data into the hands of average Americans.

Knapp, who is Managing Director of GreenRiver.org, a Brattleboro software development company, believes that social change will come after more citizens learn more about their government and he's got a plan to make that happen.

GreenRiver.org, along with Intellidimension, another Brattleboro high tech company, is one of three finalists in a national competition to help the U.S. government revamp how it gets information into the hands of the public.

The two Southern Vermont companies joined together to design a Web site that would make it easier for citizens to access the thousands of pages of data that the various government agencies produce every year.

And the two small Main Street firms, which went up against 46 other mostly larger and more heavily financed companies from all over the United States, now have a chance to meet with some powerful Washington insiders to change how government information is delivered to the public.

"Too much data produces nothing but noise. But if we can get information into people's hands that is presented well and clearly and accurately people will make more informed decisions," Knapp said from his office overlooking the Connecticut River. "We're trying to help people make connections, so they can start to take control of their communities."

Knapp and his cohorts entered the Apps for America contest, which is sponsored by The Sunlight Foundation, a non-partisan Washington group dedicated to increasing government transparency.

The Brattleboro companies developed their Web site, ThisWeKnow.org, that allows the user to enter a location in the search engine.

Reports from across the government that have recorded information on that location are gathered and the user can compare, for instance, a town's cancer rate with the toxic chemicals released by nearby factories and political contributions to area lawmakers.

Knapp said all of the various government agencies issue the reports and put out press releases occasionally on the data, but the Web site "takes the middleman out of the information presentation. Instead of the agencies controlling the story," Knapp said, "you get to tell the story."

Intellidimension Vice President of Product Development, Derrish Repchick, said the two companies put in weeks worth of work developing the site. They are flying to Washington next week to present their site, and Vivek Kundra, the Obama Administration's Federal Chief Information Officer, is expected to check out the work of the three finalists.

"It was a huge amount of data we had to work with. It was a challenge," said Repchick, who was responsible for the back end of the Web site where all of the data is accessed. "It was also fun and it gets some pretty important eyeballs on you."

Knapp is a big fan of what the Obama Administration has done to make government more transparent but he said there are still countless amounts of information out there that should be more readily available.

The winner of the contest will not necessarily win a government contract but Knapp said the contest and his site is one more way to get every citizen in the country to realize that it is their government and the

fastest way to implement change is by getting them the information they need to demand it.

"We didn't do this for the money," Knapp said about the \$10,000 prize that will go to the winner. "We want to break down all the separate silos of information and have people make connections. We did this because we believe technology can make a better future for everybody."

Voting for the best application is being done online at www.sunlightlabs.com.

RECOGNIZING THE PEASE GREETERS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the Pease Greeters for their consistent and unwavering support for our brave men and women in uniform passing through New Hampshire on their way to combat assignments in Iraq and Afghanistan or returning home to their loved ones. The Pease Greeters provide a loud and welcoming voice not only to servicemembers from New Hampshire but to all of the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who pass through the Pease Air Terminal in Portsmouth, NH.

During the Spring of 2005, when members of the Seacoast Detachment of the Marine Corps League met a flight returning from the Middle East, no one could have known that this small volunteer group of veterans and citizens would be the nucleus of a group that has met every one of the more than 130 flights landing in New Hampshire, however briefly, with soldiers heading to or returning from combat operations overseas. The Greeters, now numbering over 200 members, have helped to ensure that each of the thousands of servicemembers has received the welcome home and best wishes that they so richly deserve.

The Pease Greeters travel from all over New Hampshire to meet every military flight in to Pease, at any hour, day or night. Arriving troops are met with applause, handshakes, and a boisterous welcome, and if the flight is taking them into a combat area, the Pease Greeters assure them that they will be met right there upon their safe return. These honored guests are provided with refreshments and the opportunity to make free phone calls to their loved ones. Each of these events has been recorded and the photographs line the Pease Air Terminal Hall that is known as the "Heroes Walk."

It is my privilege to recognize the time and energy these men and women of the Pease Greeters have devoted and continue to devote to assuring our Armed Forces that their country and its citizens appreciate the sacrifices they and their families are making on our behalf. Thank you to each and every member of the Pease Greeters for providing such a warm welcome home to those returning and a warm memory of home to those departing to carry out their missions.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING CAROLINE FORD

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate and recognize a distinguished Kentuckian, 12-year-old Caroline Ford, a student at Bowling Green Christian Academy, who was recently named a 2009 National Junior Forensic League Championship award winner in San Antonio, TX.

The National Forensic League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational honor society, with alumni that include Oprah Winfrey, President Lyndon B. Johnson, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, and countless other members in government, academia, and business. Policy debate, interpretation of dramatic literature, and commentary are just examples of the types of competitions offered by the National Forensic League.

As a participant at one of the most prestigious forensic competitions, Caroline competed against over 100 students from the United States and other nations. Her awards include first place in the original oratory competition and second place in the original poetry competition.

I would like to once again congratulate Ms. Caroline Ford for being named a 2009 National Junior Forensic League Championship award winner. She is truly an inspiration to all Kentuckians, and I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors. •

REMEMBERING KEN BACON

• Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Ken Bacon on August 15. While Ken had distinguished careers in both journalism and public service, it is his tenure as the head of Refugees International that I would like to highlight. In that capacity, Ken became one of the world's leading advocates for refugees and displaced persons. By adapting and challenging his own organization, he changed the global discussion on refugees and their rights, most recently with his focus on those displaced by climate change.

Whether focused on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, or Iraq, Ken called upon the international community to take seriously the plight of those caught in the midst of conflict—innocent people losing their homes, separated from their families, and sometimes forced to forfeit their dignity to save their lives. As recently as June, Ken testified before a committee of the House of Representatives regarding the millions of Pakistanis displaced by fighting in the North West Frontier Province. He spoke powerfully:

This is not merely a question of funding, though the humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts will need robust financial commitments. The United States also