of equal justice for all first came into the world.

I was touched to see that on June 22, 36 people became American citizens in the first naturalization ceremony held in Lincoln since February. This diverse group of people renounced their loyalty to their former countries and took an oath of allegiance to the United States. Family and friends in attendance brought homemade banners, red, white, and blue balloons, and other patriotic displays.

These 36 people, despite being citizens for only a few weeks, are just as American as you or me. And these new citizens chose to be Americans. They weren't born here, but they saw America for what it is: a shining city upon a hill, where our institutions, though they sometimes falter, strive to honor Jefferson's promise of God-given rights and equal treatment before the law for all citizens.

We are not perfect, but neither can we forget our founding purpose. The United States was the first nation in history to set this lofty standard for ourselves, and we remain its best example.

This Independence Day, as our country wrestles with both a pandemic and national unrest in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, I urge you to remember that we remain, as President Abraham Lincoln said during the Civil War, ''the last best hope of earth.''

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MARNY XIONG

●Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the life of Marny Xiong, who served as chair of the St. Paul school board and was a beloved member of the community taken from us too soon on June 7, 2020. As one person put it, Marny wasn't just well-liked, she was well-loved.

Those who knew Marny best described her as someone with a joyful spirit who was great at making other people laugh. Mayor Melvin Carter of St. Paul may have said it best when he noted that she ''embodied our city's spirit, gave her heart to our students, and worked tirelessly to uplift the voices of the unheard.''

The daughter of Hmong refugees whose parents fled Laos to a refugee camp in Thailand before arriving in Minnesota, Marny and her eight siblings grew up in St. Paul and attended St. Paul public schools, Her father earned a high school diploma as an adult, opening career opportunities for him and showing Marny firsthand the value of education and hard work.

Marny Xiong represented the best of us, driven by a simple mission to do good and to give back. As the chair of the St. Paul School Board, she demanded equity for her students—and fought for justice for all people across our State. During the Covid–19 pandemic that sadly took her life, she took on the fight against hate crimes against Asian Americans and hateful rhetoric about the virus. She stood up against these acts of hate that threatened the lives and dignity of so many in Minnesota.

Marny led St. Paul's school board and Asian American elected officials in condemning xenophobia and denouncing racism, saying: ''While they brew hate, we're building a powerful movement for change.'' Marny understood that there are more students to help, more teachers to respect, more communities to support, and more justice to deliver. Marny wasn't afraid or intimidated to take on these challenges. She was resolute and determined to enlighten those who engage in the politics of fear and division. That is Marny's legacy and what we have inherited from her.

Marny Xiong is a role model and an inspiration and will be sorely missed, but as we mourn her loss today, tomorrow we can honor Marny's legacy by building on the movement to which she committed her life, a movement to see a better, more just, vision of our communities and our country, Marny's movement.

Thank you.●

RECOGNIZING AMWAT MOVING WAREHOUSING STORAGE

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit at the heart of our country. Today, it is my distinct honor to recognize a family-owned business that not only provides excellent moving, warehousing, and storage services but also prioritizes dignified work for its employees. This week, it is my pleasure to honor AMWAT Moving Warehousing Storage of Tallahassee, FL, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

AMWAT was founded in 1997 by college sweethearts Dean and Gloria Pugh in Tallahassee, FL. After helping several friends move residences, the couple realized they had the potential to start their own business. Initially named ''A Man With A Truck,'' the business started as a one-man operation consisting of a pick-up truck and trailer operating out of Dean's spare bedroom. Soon after, A Man With a Truck moved into a small warehouse, hired six employees and acquired three moving trucks.

In 2008, Dean and Gloria acquired the largest, oldest moving company in the Tallahassee area and rebranded as AMWAT Moving Warehousing Storage. AMWAT has grown to include 26 employees and a 13-truck fleet. They provide long-term storage, handle shipping for local businesses, and provide shipping services nationwide. Gloria serves as president and chief executive officer and Dean is the chief operating officer.

AMWAT's high-quality work has earned awards from business groups, including the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, the Tally Awards, Angie's List, and Wheaton World Wide Moving. Dean and Gloria are also active in the American Moving and Storage Association and the Professional Movers Association of Florida.

From the beginning, Dean and Gloria have understood that providing dignified work is crucial to personal and community development. Through training, mentorship, and teamwork, they encourage their employees to feel a sense of ownership in the company and take pride in their work. At AMWAT, the employees are the most valued asset.

Locally, AMWAT is committed to addressing poverty, upward mobility, education, and the arts. Their signature charity event is the annual Summer Fill-a-Truck Food and Fund Drive, which benefits the Second Harvest of the Big Bend. They have also partnered with ECHO, Junior League of Tallahassee, and LeMoyne Arts.

Like many other small businesses, AMWAT experienced a sharp decline in revenue due to the coronavirus pandemic. When the U.S. Small Business Administration launched the Paycheck Protection Program, PPP, Gloria and Dean quickly applied. The PPP provides forgivable loans to impacted small businesses and nonprofits who maintain their payroll during the COVID–19 pandemic. When their funding was approved, Gloria and Dean used it to keep their 26 employees paid and adapt their business procedures to meet public safety standards. For Gloria and Dean, the PPP was a ''blessing'' and a ''godsend,'' providing the security needed to continue serving their customers, employees, and community.

AMWAT Moving Warehousing Storage is an outstanding example of the important role small businesses play in creating dignified work in their communities. I commend AMWAT for providing excellent moving, storage, and logistical services and uplifting their employees. Congratulations to Dean, Gloria, and the entire team at AMWAT. I look forward to watching your continued growth and success.●

VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalist essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the 10th annual ''State of the Union'' essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

SAMUEL DOOLEY, MILTON HIGH SCHOOL, SENIOR

The country that we live in today is plagued with fundamental problems. Ranging from political corruption to an inefficient healthcare system, yet the single most important issue facing our country today is nationwide environmental neglect. Without