

patriots—are models of courage and respect for our democratic system that the President and his circle of enablers should look to emulate rather than belittle.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL WOMEN
VETERANS UNITED

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we celebrated Veterans Day last Monday. On the 11th day of the 11th month, we pause to honor the courage and sacrifice of our Nation's veterans. Millions of Americans have served in uniform over the years, many of whom return home with visible and invisible wounds alike, often to serve again in their communities.

I had the privilege to meet with a group of such dedicated veterans recently at a meeting of the National Women Veterans United in Chicago. National Women Veterans United is the only center in Illinois dedicated to serving women servicemembers and veterans. Run by women and for women, I met with founder and president, the formidable Rochelle Crump. Rochelle served in the Army during the Vietnam era and has a long history of working with the VA at the Federal, State, and local levels. Rochelle and other members of her community in Chicago noticed that women veterans were falling through the cracks when it came to accessing the benefits they have earned, so they founded National Women Veterans United in 2005 to help fill the gap.

The VA reports that there are approximately 2 million women veterans in America, reflecting 9 percent of the total veteran population. By 2045, the share of female veterans is projected to double to 18 percent. Women are among the fastest growing segments of the veteran population; yet many women veterans are either not aware of the benefits afforded to them or they are frustrated with the VA's inability to understand or address the unique needs of women veterans. For example, women veterans tend to be older. The top reported health issues they face are PTSD, TBI, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, but many also require services related to unique health needs such as military sexual trauma and reproductive health.

Now, the VA has made great strides over the years to provide for women veterans, but we must do more, especially when it comes to changing the culture at the VA that has often been a barrier to women seeking care at the VA. Groups like National Women Veterans United try to break down those barriers. They have helped hundreds of women veterans and their families, providing assistance in navigating the VA, holding healthcare screenings, and offering a host of personal and professional development opportunities and support groups. National Women Veterans United also supported entire families, such as the Gold Star Robinson-Wilson family. SGT Simone Robinson

of Robbins, IL, was 21 years old when she died of wounds sustained while serving in Afghanistan. At the time, she had a 2-year-old daughter. National Women Veterans United has helped care for the family after the sergeant's death. Earlier this year, they named their beautiful new center after her, now the SGT Simone A. Robinson Military Women Veteran's Center.

I would like to recognize a few of the other great women I had the opportunity to meet during my visit with National Women Veterans United, including two Korean war veterans: Wille Merine Rouse and Miljan Akin—Rouse also served again in Iraq, as did her daughter Rene—Sharon Stokes-Parry, who served in Iraq with the Marine Corps; Diane Halle, a retired U.S. Army master sergeant who later worked at the Jesse Brown VA and with Team Rubicon on disaster relief around the world; Jeannie Adams, a Vietnam Air Force veteran who serves as their treasurer; Donna Cooper; Hazel Noble; Valerie Harris—the list goes on.

I look forward to continuing to work with National Women Veterans United. These brave women stood guard for our freedom in uniform, and now, they continue to stand in support of their community—and specifically as African Americans, some of whom served during times of racial segregation, they faced challenges not only as women, but as Black women. Now, they help others who face challenges.

May we use their inspiration—and the inspiration of all of our veterans—to find our own ways to sacrifice for the good of our Nation and our world.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, the Washington Nationals' upset victory in the 2019 World Series reminded a good friend of mine, Rabbi Michael Cohen of Manchester, VT, of another unforeseen win. Fifty years ago, the New York Mets, led by star pitcher Tom Seaver, and manager—former Brooklyn Dodgers star Gil Hodges—shocked the baseball world by defeating the heavily favored Baltimore Orioles in the fall classic.

Rabbi Cohen, who has led an exemplary life, taking action on major issues including Mideast peace, antisemitism, and other difficult challenges, sees a common theme in these two victories, 50 years apart. Life, as in sports, offers all of us the opportunity to achieve what at the outset seems insurmountable. Peace in the Middle East is possible. We can end the scourges of antisemitism, xenophobia, and racism.

Rabbi Cohen's words in an article published in the Jerusalem Post on October 28, 2019, "Letter from America: The '69 Mets and lessons for today" are a powerful reminder of what we humans can achieve against the odds.

I ask unanimous consent that Rabbi Cohen's writing be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

[The Jerusalem Post]

(By Michael M. Cohen, October 28, 2019)

LETTER FROM AMERICA: THE '69 METS AND
LESSONS FOR TODAY

The articles we read in The Jerusalem Post and other news sources can be daunting, leaving us with a feeling of hopelessness and a debilitating sense that the conditions of the world are only getting worse.

From the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, which seems intractable, to climate change, to endless strife in the Middle East, to an assault on the institutions of, and belief in, democracy, to the worldwide rise of antisemitism, xenophobia and racism, to name but a few, the odds appear against us.

Fifty years ago the New York Mets began the baseball season with 100 to 1 odds against the scenario they would win the World Series. Before the 1969 season they had won a total of 394 games and lost a staggering 737 games since they first started playing in 1962. A sense of gloom pervaded the team. But in 1969 they would win 100 games, and this year's World Series marks the 50th anniversary of the final out in game five against the favorite and imposing Baltimore Orioles led by Frank Robinson and Boog Powell.

Baseball and other sports are not only about wins and losses and statistics. On a deeper level, sports are a metaphor for life and a holder of lessons for life. The '69 Mets are no different for us today.

The 1969 Season did not begin with a stellar start for the Mets. By the end of May they were continuing to lose more than win, with a record of 18–23.

I attended my first major league baseball game on June 19, when the Mets beat the Phillies in Philadelphia at the old Connie Mack Stadium, 6–5. Member of the tribe Art Shamsky went four for four, including two home runs, and pitcher Tom Seaver stole second base!

Three weeks later Seaver would pitch two outs short of a perfect game against the Chicago Cubs, as the Mets moved within 3 games of the division-leading Cubs.

Change seemed at hand, but change is rarely perfectly linear. By mid-August the Mets had fallen 10 games behind the Cubs. But then the Mets took all the accumulated and invaluable lessons from the losses of those previous seasons and applied them to win an incredible 38 of their last 49 games, and win the Eastern Division of the National League.

That is the thing about baseball. A good batting average is .300, which means that 70% of the time a good player fails when he is at bat. Players will tell you they take all the lessons from their previous at bats every time they are in the batter's box, with most of those lessons coming from failed experiences.

In addition, baseball is the only sport where the team on offense, the team at bat, does not have the ball. Rather, the team on defense pitches to you. That dynamic makes the encounter more difficult, but batters know those are the conditions they operate within.

The Mets would go on to sweep baseball legend Hank Aaron and the Atlanta Braves in the National League playoff series and then face the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series. They would win the Series by tenacity, hustle, a strong work ethic, smart baseball, and that factor out of our hands, serendipity.

On the second pitch of the first game of the World Series, Don Buford hit a home run off Seaver, and the Orioles would go on to win