

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BENEVOLENT
AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF THE ELKS

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, February 16, 2018 marks the 150th Anniversary of the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks. The Elks is an American fraternal society dedicated to serving and caring for our citizens, communities and country. The Order continues to grow and thrive with a membership of nearly one million members and 2,000 lodges nationwide.

The Elks is dedicated to the ideals of charity, justice and patriotism, and has invested millions of hours annually in building stronger communities, assisting homeless veterans and supporting youth substance abuse prevention initiatives.

Patriotism is central to the Order's principles and is demonstrated in some of the organization's charitable endeavors. In 1907, the Elks first adopted June 14 as Flag Day out of reverence for the American flag and the sacrifices made in honor of it. Almost 40 years later, Congress officially recognized June 14 as the national holiday honoring the American flag. Elks members donated over one million dollars for the renovation of the Statue of Liberty, which helped to restore this important symbol of freedom. Elks members also contributed nearly two million dollars for the building of the National World War II Memorial in honor of the more than 16,000,000 people who served in the second world war.

The Order of the Elks has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving our county's veterans. The Elks are deeply engaged in the Veterans Affairs medical facilities by providing support and friendship to veterans at VA facilities. Furthermore, the Elks answered the call of the Department of Veterans Affairs to better address veteran homelessness by founding the Welcome Home Program.

Providing mentorship and instilling good character and moral values in our country's youth is another import facet of the Elk's mission. Our youth are the leaders of tomorrow, and the Elks are committed to helping them succeed by supporting scholarships that allow more children to pursue their dreams. Further, the Order educates parents and their children about the dangers of using illegal substances, tobacco products, alcohol and abusing prescription drugs. These prevention and awareness programs help give young people the tools and information they need to make good decisions when faced with negative social pressures.

I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to join me in recognizing and congratulating the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks on its 150th Anniversary. The Order of the Elks has been and will continue to be a shining example of honor and service to neighbor, community and nation.