



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016

No. 7

Senate

REMEMBERING DIANA TABLER FORBES

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, today I wish to pay tribute to a dedicated, long-time public servant, wife, and mother, Diana Tabler Forbes. Diana died peacefully at her home in Alexandria, VA, on December 28, 2015, after a courageous 3-year battle with esophageal cancer.

Diana was a truly remarkable public servant. For over three decades, she served senior government leaders from both the executive and legislative branches of government in the areas of military health and personnel policy.

Throughout her career, Diana often played a central role in responding to both international crises and domestic challenges. From 2004 until her retirement in 2013, she served as the senior professional staff member primarily responsible for oversight of the military health system on the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving me as ranking member and previously Chairman John Warner. In that role, she helped shape the legislative response to improving care and services to wounded, ill, and injured military servicemembers following a series of Pulitzer prize-winning Washington Post stories on health care support provided at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Additionally, Diana played an instrumental role in developing legislation that established TRICARE benefits for military reservists and their families; provided community support for military families with disabilities; expanded combat casualty care research; and ensured access to healthcare services for servicemembers suffering from behavioral health conditions, like post-traumatic stress, and from traumatic brain injury.

In 2001, Diana was the senior health leader in the Pentagon on September 11. After relocating to other government buildings following

the attack on the Pentagon, she oversaw the coordination of military medical support in both Washington, DC, and New York City.

Shortly after the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, Diana volunteered to serve in Iraq as a civilian in 2003, where she played a key role in the reconstruction of health systems in Iraq while serving as an adviser to the coalition provisional authority with U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq.

During the 1990s, Diana served in executive positions within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Health Affairs, and helped oversee and implement many of the major components of the military health system now in place today, to include the establishment of TRICARE—the military's global health benefit that serves 9.5 million Americans today.

Following her retirement from Federal service, Diana continued to serve others. She remained closely connected with the Department of Defense, and she supported military servicemembers and families on the board of the National Military Family Association.

Diana's limitless energy and passion for the well-being of servicemembers and their families was legendary. She ensured everyone in Congress remembered who we served and why we served them. She knew how to cut through the bureaucracy and provide real solutions for those in need.

I express my sympathy to her husband, Ripley Forbes; her daughter, Meredith, a schoolteacher in Alexandria; and son, Jonathan, a junior at Virginia Commonwealth University. As they mourn, they should know that Diana's legacy lives on in them and in the many thousands of servicemembers and their families that she selflessly served.

John McCain