

## **Remarks by Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) accepting the 2014 Charles T. Manatt Democracy Award:**

Thank you for that warm welcome. It's an honor to be with so many individuals who work diligently every day to support good governance and defend democratic rights across the globe. I am proud to work alongside you toward our common goal: to support the spread of democracy by ensuring all citizens have the right to participate in free and fair elections.

In just a few short weeks, American men and women will head to the polling booth and participate in the governance of our country by casting their votes for elected officials. As Americans, we are fortunate to live in a society where our civil liberties are protected by the Constitution. But these rights that are sometimes taken for granted in our country are often beyond reach for millions of people around the world.

Just consider what has been taking place in Hong Kong this week. On Sunday, police used tear gas, pepper spray and batons on thousands of peaceful protesters who had gathered to demand democratic elections for the city's leader in 2017. According to the nonprofit organization, Freedom House, last year 54 countries showed overall declines in political rights and civil liberties, compared with just 40 countries that demonstrated gains. That means that for the eighth consecutive year, there was a greater decline than gain in democracy worldwide. Some of the worst offenders were countries located across the Middle East and North Africa.

Freedom is a basic human right and history has shown us that the expansion of freedom is our best hope for peace in the future. All citizens should have the right to live freely and participate in the decision making process of their society.

At a time when human rights and civil liberties are under attack in many regions across the world, efforts by organizations like IFES are more important than ever. By working to ensure all citizens have the opportunity to participate in free and fair elections, IFES is actively spreading freedom across the globe. By empowering those who are often overlooked during election season, IFES is helping show the world that a true democracy represents all people – whether young or old, male or female. And by providing technical electoral assistance and on-the-ground expertise during elections, IFES is helping ensure our hope for the future remains bright.

This is no small endeavor. If liberty is not actively defended, it can and will be lost. President Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same." The work IFES has conducted since 1987 in more than 135 countries is doing just that – preserving for the next generation the opportunity to enjoy the freedoms of today.

But those freedoms do not come about simply because an election is held. The important work of building a sustainable democracy extends far beyond Election Day. As we saw this year in Afghanistan, the activities that take place post-Election Day — including the peaceful transition of power — are just as critical to maintaining a sustainable democracy as the ballots being cast.

We all know there is no such thing as a perfect election and that even fully-developed democracies face many challenges on voting day. But every election sets the stage for reforms to take place and allows the government to hear from its citizens. So it is critical that we continue to support good governance and defend democratic rights across the globe.

Human freedom is powerful force that can change the course of history. It wasn't that long ago when critics claimed that democracy in Japan and Germany would "never work" after World War II. But consider all that has transpired in the past 69 years and the strength of both nations today – which are ranked among the top 5 of the world's largest economies.

As World War II was drawing to a close nearly seven decades ago, President Truman said this about the significance of America's role in the world: "[W]e are assisting in the liberation of entire nations. Gradually, the shackles of slavery are being broken by the forces of freedom. ... America has become one of the most powerful forces for good on earth. We must keep it so."

America remains one of the most powerful forces for good on this earth and our efforts to ensure all citizens have a voice in the way they are governed must remain steadfast.

Someone who has been and continues to be a champion of the spread of freedom across the globe is my friend, Bill Hybl. Given his role as Vice Chairman and Executive Committee Chairman of IFES, I know his commitment to freedom and democracy comes as no surprise to this crowd.

In addition to his work at IFES, Bill has been a longtime leader of the Olympic games and continues to serve as CEO and Chairman of El Pomar Foundation in Colorado. He is also a well-respected leader in American public diplomacy and democracy building efforts given his appointments to the U.S. Commission on Public Diplomacy and his service on the board of the International Republican Institute.

There are many things I admire and respect about Bill Hybl, but what stands out to me most is his commitment to serving others. Despite his tremendous success in many areas of his life, his desire to make a difference in the lives of those around him remains the driving force behind all he does.

From his longtime commitment to Olympic athletes, to helping children reach their full potential through Big Brothers Big Sisters, to his generous scholarship support for students through the Fund for American Studies, Bill has continually invested in the lives of young people. So it was no surprise when he received the Outward Bound Compass Award in 2009 for a lifetime of outstanding service to America's young people.

Without further delay, I'd like to invite Bill up to the podium to receive a special award recognizing his service and outstanding legacy to IFES.