

CONGRATULATING BRIGADIER
GENERAL CHRISTOPHER
FINERTY UPON HIS PROMOTION
TO BRIGADIER GENERAL

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Brigadier General Christopher E. Finerty for his outstanding service to our country and congratulate him on his promotion to Brigadier General in the United States Air Force. General Finerty has worked closely with me, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and across Capitol Hill to inform and advise the Congress so that we may ensure a strong and ready National Guard. He has also helped the Pentagon work more productively with Congress, promoting a strong and efficient national defense.

General Finerty has done this work selflessly. He quietly, but tenaciously advocates for the Chief of the National Guard Bureau's priorities to make the National Guard a ready, capable force for operations in the homeland and overseas.

General Finerty's promotion grows from a career of accomplishments and experience. Prior to becoming the head of the National Guard Bureau's Office of Legislative Liaison, where he works directly for the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Finerty was Vice Commander of the Air National Guard Readiness Center and simultaneously the Commander of the 201st Mission Support Squadron, which together oversee personnel and policy across the country. He has previous tours in the National Guard Bureau's legislative liaison office, the Air Force congressional budget liaison office, and on the Air National Guard staff. He logged over 3,300 hours piloting HH-60 rescue helicopters and flew 45 combat missions. General Finerty is a 1992 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy.

General Finerty dedicates all of his time and energy to his work, with two exceptions—his children, Ryan and Kate. General Finerty's first priority are his children, and no father could be more devoted. Kate and Ryan inspire and strengthen him.

Please join me in congratulating General Finerty on his well-earned promotion and in expressing our gratitude for his selfless service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to have my votes recorded on the House floor on Tuesday January 9, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 4581, H.R. 4564 and H. Res. 676.

MORE MONEY, LESS PROBLEMS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was grateful to learn that Tide-water Boats, led by Jimmy Metts, is investing \$8.3 million to expand their manufacturing facility in Lexington, South Carolina. This investment will create 100 new jobs.

This news is on top of AFLAC announcing that they will be expanding their 700 employees in Columbia, South Carolina, managed by Daniel Lebish, and doubling their employee 401K matching funds.

On the same day Republicans passed historic tax cuts, AT&T led by Pam Lackey announced they are providing 200,000 employees a \$1,000 bonus. Comcast, whose leader in South Carolina is Douglas Guthrie, will be providing \$1,000 bonuses to 100,000 employees. BB&T, a valued corporate citizen led by Mike Brennan, will be raising their employee wages to \$15 an hour and providing a \$1,200 bonus for 27,000 employees.

Boeing of Charleston, led by Joan Robinson-Berry, announced they will be donating \$100 million to charity that focuses on education, local communities, veterans and military personnel.

But the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is not only for businesses. I appreciate that next month, American families will see more of their own money in their paychecks.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

Best wishes to Chairman DARRELL ISSA and Kathy Issa for their dedicated service as they announce their retirement. We look forward to their continued service for the American people.

IN RECOGNITION OF A SUCCESSFUL IDAHO CONSERVATION PROGRAM

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an important conservation program taking place in central Idaho that was created as part of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Jerry Peak Wilderness Additions Act. I also want to acknowledge the outstanding cooperation between Idaho conservationists and ranchers that have made this program a success.

The signing of the law in 2015 created three new wilderness areas totaling over 429 square miles. This jewel in the heart of Idaho was protected for future generations to enjoy. It also returned significant amounts of wilderness study areas back to multiple use allowing individuals and families to engage in outdoor and recreational activities for years to come.

When I began working on the Boulder-White Clouds bill nearly 20 years ago, ranchers on the East Fork of the Salmon River were facing significant headwinds to their traditional way of life. Lawsuits, federal regulations, and other

obstacles were making it difficult to graze on their federal allotments. In many instances, their allotted animal unit months (AUMs) had been significantly reduced and in some cases completely eliminated. The trend going forward was not positive.

It became clear to me that providing opportunities for the ranching families to continue their livelihoods would be critical to a final outcome. A final bill would need to provide area ranchers with options that could help them reset their grazing operations and provide greater certainty for them in the future.

To meet this need, we developed a program in which area ranchers could voluntarily retire individual allotments that might not be economically viable to their ongoing ranching operations in exchange for compensation from a private third party.

This program specified that agreements were to be voluntary, that ranchers would be paid for all of the AUMs on their allotment and that funding would come from third party private entities and not the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that last month marked the completion of the initial phase of voluntary retirements.

In the past year, four families have retired five allotments and received over \$1.35 million in private compensation. Some of these allotments were proving difficult to use and were marginally viable in their traditional operations. Through our program, the ranchers were paid for every AUM on each allotment.

On the conservation side, over 126,000 acres of pristine and ecologically important areas that include winter and summer range for elk and deer, important sage grouse habitat, and some of the highest elevation spawning habitat for ocean-going salmon and steelhead found anywhere will no longer be grazed. These were high conflict areas that have experienced past litigation and would probably see future litigation or regulation.

I am very pleased to say that the voluntary retirement program has been a success and a win for both the ranchers and for conservation. While the initial third party funding for the voluntary retirement program has expired, the mechanism still exists for ranchers to retire allotments in the future, should they so choose. In doing so, they will be free to enter into new agreements with new terms. These future agreements will be of their own accord between the ranchers and conservation interests.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to the voluntary retirement program.

The Idaho Conservation League were the backbone behind the voluntary grazing retirement program. The legislation provided the mechanism for the voluntary retirements and they provided the muscle, resources, and expertise to carry out this initial batch of retirements.

I want to give special thanks to Rick Johnson, the Executive Director of the Idaho Conservation League. Rick worked very closely with my staff and me as we developed the program. He made sure the grant funding was in place prior to passage of the legislation so that promises made to the ranchers would be kept after the bill became law. Rick has been a true friend and partner from start to finish in this process.

A very big thanks and well done go to John Robison, Public Lands Director of the Idaho