

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KATIE PORTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my votes on Roll Call No. 461, No. 462, No. 463, and No. 464 on November 14, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 461, NAY on Roll Call No. 462, YEA on Roll Call No. 463, and NAY on Roll Call No. 464.

RECOGNIZING COUNCILWOMAN KAREN GEORGE'S DEDICATION TO HER COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Councilwoman Karen George of Southgate, Michigan, as she is inducted into the Southgate Parks and Rec Hall of Fame this evening. Her decades of service to her community are worthy of commendation.

Karen first served on the Southgate City Council from 1983 to 1999. During this time she was the Council Liaison to many Boards, Commissions, and to the Southgate Community School District. After her retirement as an Adjunct Professor at Wayne State University, many residents urged her to run for City Council again. In her second term as Councilwoman, Karen is currently serving as Council Liaison to the Library Commission and the City Beautiful Commission.

In addition to her leadership chairing community events and working tirelessly to strengthen programs and services in Southgate, Karen is also legendary for her many and varied contributions to sports in the Southgate Community. An accomplished softball player herself, she coached and financially sponsored girl's softball for over thirty years. Karen believes that sports play a vital role in giving girls a strong sense of worth, a feeling of belonging, and provides discipline that extends off the field of play. She also helped organize the Southgate Men's Senior Citizen Softball team, which she managed for six years, as well as the Downriver Women's Softball League.

Karen is a storied athlete herself, having competed in the Downriver Senior Olympics for many years and earning 25 medals for her city. A gun enthusiast, she competed in pistol matches hosted by the Southgate and Taylor police departments and took 1st place in the 1989 Women's Division.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating Councilwoman Karen George for all of her contributions to the sporting world in Southgate, Michigan. Her dedication over decades has led to a more cohesive and healthier community for all who live there.

HONORING REV. DR. GARY CARR'S CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rev. Dr. Gary Carr for his leadership and countless contributions over the course of his long career of public service.

Rev. Dr. Carr's career began with 28 years of dedicated military service in the U.S. Army. Retiring at the rank of Command Sergeant Major, Rev. Dr. Carr demonstrated his commitment to our country and his fellow soldiers. Following his military service, Rev. Dr. Carr transitioned to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), where he has worked for 15 years. At NGA, Rev. Dr. Carr has worked to hire qualified individuals with specialized skills in geospatial intelligence, mapping, and related fields as Chief of Talent Acquisition.

Rev. Dr. Carr has earned many academic achievements, including Bachelor of Science, Master of Business Administration, and Doctoral degrees from two different universities. These educational experiences have contributed to his remarkable commitment to serving others.

Rev. Dr. Gary Carr continues to be a pillar of his community as he has served as the Pastor of Shiloh New Site Baptist Church in Stafford, Virginia since September 2022.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in honoring Rev. Dr. Gary Carr. His commitment to public service and dedication to our country has been immeasurable. I would like to congratulate him on an exceptional career and wish him the best in his well-earned retirement.

CELEBRATING THE GRAND OPENING AND RIBBON CUTTING OF THE RESTORED HOTEL GRIM

HON. NATHANIEL MORAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the grand opening of the Lofts at the Grim, in the city of Texarkana. Today marks the completion of the highly anticipated restoration project of the iconic Grim Hotel located in Texas' First Congressional District.

This community landmark, originally completed in 1925, has served as a community gathering place for decades, bringing together locals and visitors alike in the spirit of true Texas hospitality.

Thanks to the combined efforts of national developer, Cohen-Esrey, and local partner, Premier Texarkana Development, this historic building will once again support the vibrant local community by providing commercial spaces and affordable housing.

As a nod to the longstanding significance of the Grim Hotel, historical features of the building have been preserved, such as its grand lobby and the Palm Court Room, while the living spaces have been revitalized with modern amenities.

The refurbished Lofts at the Grim will provide comfortable housing for hardworking East Texans, bringing more families into Texarkana's historic district.

Ultimately this revitalization project serves as a reminder of the importance of both honoring history and embracing change. I offer my sincere thanks to those who have been a part of this project.

I am looking forward to seeing the positive impact that the Lofts at the Grim will have on the surrounding community and Texas' First Congressional District as a whole.

ENGAGE THE PACIFIC ACT

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my Engage the Pacific Act, co-introduced with 11 of my like-minded colleagues who are focused on our country's engagement through the Indo-Pacific.

Successive administrations and Congresses have recognized that no region is more consequential to the future of our country than the Indo-Pacific, to include the Pacific Islands. It is crucial that we continue to broaden and deepen U.S. engagement in the Pacific Islands in pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific, particularly in the context of the major challenges the Pacific Islands face, such as natural disasters, economic obstacles, maintenance of civil society and threats to democracy and sovereignty from malign actors. This is not just a matter of diplomacy; it is a matter of shared responsibility and mutual benefit.

To help address these challenges and ensure our nation continues to play a critical role in strengthening U.S. public engagement in the Pacific Islands, we have introduced the Engage the Pacific Act. This legislation is grounded in specific requests from Pacific Islands leaders, as well as priorities identified by our own U.S. government officials. This bill clearly reflects the alignment of Pacific Islands priorities with U.S. interests in the region, particularly when it comes to fostering civil society, economic resilience and democratic governance.

First, this bill requires the Secretary of State, in consultation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator and the Secretary of Defense, to establish the Committee on Engagement with Civil Society Organizations in the Pacific Islands. This Committee will be tasked with co-ordinating interagency engagement with civil society organizations in the Pacific Islands, to include media organizations, environmental organizations and faith-based organizations.

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

These non-governmental community organizations are pillars of Pacific Islands society; they often fill critical gaps in delivery of foreign assistance and reach important sectors of the population. The Committee will also be required to submit a strategy on enhanced engagement with civil society organizations in the Pacific Islands.

Second, the bill requires the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of USAID and the Secretary of Defense, to refine our overall communications strategy in the Pacific Islands. The United States is and for centuries has been a Pacific nation, deeply engaged as a partner in our mutual present and future. This strategy is crucial to fully and adequately communicating the breadth and depth of American efforts throughout the Pacific.

Third, the bill codifies the Indo-Pacific Media Advancement Program (IPMAP). IPMAP promotes free media in the Indo-Pacific, including in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, through training in countering misinformation and business sustainability, small grants for equipment and content sharing agreements. IPMAP is currently running under a two-year, \$2 million Countering PRC Influence Grant from the Department of State. With those limited resources, IPMAP has already been able to work with 30 media outlets and has been incredibly well-received. Officially establishing this program under the Department of State and authorizing appropriations for it will ensure that IPMAP's important work can continue for years to come.

Fourth, this bill establishes the Pacific Islands Training and Resources for Advancement in Development, Education and Skills (TRADES) Program under USAID. Many Pacific Islands leaders have commended American efforts in the realm of professional development through higher education scholarship programs, and they have advocated for efforts to expand such programs to technical and vocational education and training. This provision of the bill seeks to rectify that by authorizing USAID to assist with workforce development in the region through scholarships, training and grants in sectors of critical importance to the Pacific Islands, such as construction, tourism, boat maintenance and fisheries. The Pacific Islands TRADES Program will support the region's economic resilience and capacity to maximize the benefits of national investment and business opportunities.

Finally, this bill supports and requires a report on American Spaces in the region. American Spaces are public diplomacy facilities operated or supported by the Department of State that promote effective engagement with foreign audiences toward the full understanding of the United States. These facilities are a crucial component of American outreach in the region, allowing residents to learn about opportunities to study in the United States, participate in mentorship programs and more. The report requires a description of any additional resources needed for the expansion of this program.

These provisions represent and enhance the sustained commitment of the United States to the Pacific Islands. This bill serves as a testament to the United States' enduring presence in the region and demonstrates that we are willing and able to respond to the region's specific needs in a way that is fully consistent with American national interests.

Together, let us Engage the Pacific—for today, for tomorrow and for generations to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SANDRA MAE KING HALL

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Sandra Mae King Hall.

Sandra was raised in Fresno, California alongside her eleven siblings. She graduated from San Joaquin Memorial High School and went on to pursue a career in real estate investment, property management, and newspaper distribution. Sandra played a critical role in protecting local journalism, operating a newspaper distributorship with her husband, Frank Hall, providing local news to Pleasant Hill residents from 1977 through 2009. She has received numerous accolades for her contributions to the business community, earning the Pleasant Hill Business Person of the Year Award in 1986 and the 2010 American Association of Independent News Distributors Award. Additionally, Sandra was selected as former Congressman George Miller's delegate at the 1986 White House Conference on Small Business.

Outside of her work as an entrepreneur, Sandra loved music, travel, and giving back to her community. Her passion for music was evident to all who knew her, practicing international folk dances and singing in the choir. Throughout her life, Sandra was very dedicated to her community and was involved with the Kiwanis Club of Martinez, Boys and Girls Club of Martinez, and St. Catherine of Siena parish.

Sadly, Sandra passed away at the age of 77 on September 15, 2024. She is survived by her husband of 44 years, Frank Hall; her children, Janene Sides (David) and Michael Nicol (Christina); her grandchildren Robert (Kaityn), Christina, Daniel, Sarah, and Madisen; her great-grandchildren, Quinn, Soleil, and Elijah; and numerous nieces, nephews, and other family members. She will be remembered for her entrepreneurial spirit, sense of humor, and remarkable leadership. Please join me in recognizing Sandra Hall for her many contributions to our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DANIEL WOOLDRIDGE

HON. H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Daniel Wooldridge, who passed away on August 20, 2024.

Born on June 5, 1934, in Lynchburg, Virginia, Mr. Wooldridge grew up in the foster care system. He was ready to support and provide for his foster family from an early age. He sold hot dogs, ran a paper route and drove a school bus before he reached 16 years of age.

Interested in athletics, Mr. Wooldridge attended Lynchburg College (now the University

of Lynchburg) where he played basketball, soccer and baseball. He is a member of the school's athletics Hall of Fame.

At Lynchburg College, he met his wife Nancy, whom he was married to for 65 loving years before her passing in 2020.

After graduating from Lynchburg College in 1956 and later completing graduate coursework from the University of Virginia, Mr. Wooldridge pursued a 30-plus year career as a life insurance salesman.

As an athlete, Mr. Wooldridge played minor league baseball for the Salem Pirates and coached baseball and football at William Fleming High School in Roanoke. His heart and strong belief in fair play was displayed through his time as a referee, officiating college basketball games for 23 years, including 13 NCAA postseason tournaments.

In 1976, Mr. Wooldridge became the very first commissioner of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC). The athletic league consisted of small Division III schools, including his alma mater Lynchburg College. He served in this post for 21 years before his retirement.

Additionally, Mr. Wooldridge was one of two American basketball officials at the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games.

Mr. Wooldridge's service to the Roanoke Valley community cannot be overlooked. He served as president of the Salem Rotary Club and Roanoke Valley Sports Club, dedicated time as a member of the Roanoke City School Board, and contributed as a deacon at Oakland Baptist Church.

He and Nancy also founded the Roanoke Valley Fellowship of Christian Athletes in 1964. They took great pride in developing student-athletes and promoting the Christian faith.

Mr. Wooldridge is survived by his daughters, Rebecca (Wyatt) Ewell, Diane (Rob) Laing, and Sarah Wooldridge; his grandchildren, Rachel (Scott) Forrester, Tyler (Erin) Ewell, Alex Ewell, and Daniel Laing; his great-grandchildren, Clara, Thomas and Anna Ewell; his sister, Martha Smith; his sister-in-law, Katherine Cochran; his nephews, Preston (Tonja) Cochran and Neil Smith; his great-niece, Kalei Cochran; and cousin, Betty Bailey (Clyde Evely).

Faced with adversity from an early age, Mr. Wooldridge's story of perseverance and success is powerful and inspiring. The legacy he leaves behind will be remembered by the sports community and the larger Roanoke Valley.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding votes I missed on November 20, 2024. Had I been present for Roll Call No. 474, on the North Korean Human Rights Re-authorization Act of 2023, I would have voted yea. This is common sense, bipartisan legislation that will promote human rights activities in North Korea.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF DAVID C. ORTOLANO FOR HIS CAREER OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO THE CITY OF DUNKIRK, NEW YORK

HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my constituents in recognizing one of Dunkirk's finest: Chief David C. Ortolano, who has retired after thirty-nine years of public service in law enforcement.

Chief Ortolano leaves behind a record of distinguished service as a mentor, leader and guardian for the City of Dunkirk. He has consistently gone above and beyond, fostering deep connections within the city through D.A.R.E., National Night Out, his involvement in youth programs, like Mock DWI and Trunk-or-Treat. Chief Ortolano fostered relationships that continue to make profound and positive differences in our community.

David led the City of Dunkirk Police Department through challenges with unwavering integrity, while always prioritizing the safety and well-being of both his officers and the citizens we serve. His critical work in establishing the Special Response Team and his two Medals of Valor are testaments to his leadership and commitment to excellence. He has received recognitions from local, state, and federal agencies for his contributions to law enforcement and community policing.

Chief Ortolano's leadership has shaped the Dunkirk Police Department into a strong, united force. His mentorship and dedication have inspired future leaders, and the values he instilled will guide this department long after he departs.

I ask that this body join me in recognizing Chief David C. Ortolano for his commitment to keeping the people of Dunkirk safe. On behalf of the United States Congress, and the constituents of the 23rd Congressional District, I thank him—and hope he enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 474; YEA on Roll Call No. 475; and YEA on Roll Call No. 476.

**RECOGNIZING YOM HAPLITIM,
JEWISH REFUGEE DAY**

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jewish Refugee Day, or Yom Haplitim. On November 30th, we remember the 900,000 Jews who were exiled

from Arab and Muslim-majority nations during the early years of the State of Israel.

For over 2,500 years, Jews lived in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Gulf region. Over generations, Jews were subjected to discrimination and even second-class citizenship in many cases. But, nevertheless, they were loyal citizens who made substantial contributions to the culture and development of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Morocco, and several other Arab countries.

In the wake of the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, entire Jewish communities were forcefully exiled from the countries in which they had lived for millennia. Their homes and property were stripped from them along with their citizenship. These women, men, and children fled in a mass exodus, leaving everything behind to start new lives in the lands of their ancestors, as many of them were absorbed by Israel and now form an indispensable part of the fabric of the Jewish homeland. Other refugees became part of the Jewish Diaspora, including in the United States.

I had the privilege of meeting with researchers and historians in Davie, Florida who are crucially documenting and preserving the life stories of Jews who lived for millennia across the Middle East and North Africa.

I was honored to have the opportunity to hear survivors share testimonies of experiencing exile from their countries and bravely navigating a new life. It is critical that these stories are preserved for future generations.

Their struggle and resilience—along with the hundreds of thousands of Jews who also stood in their shoes—is inspiring. It is a testament to the improbable survival of the Jewish people throughout history.

In 1910, the first Jewish person permanently settled in Broward County. From then on, our community has only grown, diversified and thrived.

Throughout my time in Congress, I've always fought to embrace the diversity of our Nation and the immigrant heritage that follows us to this day.

I am proud to represent the Jewish American community in my district and to use my platform to amplify the voices of Jewish Americans.

Since the horrors of October 7, antisemitism has risen sharply around the world. Many Jewish Americans are fearful and isolated as threats reemerge from the darkness.

But I and the Jewish American community—and Jews all over the world—will not be deterred. The history of the Jewish people is characterized by our strength and resilience in the face of strife. We must acknowledge the history of the Jewish refugees to keep their stories alive.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call Vote No. 475 on H.R. 8368, I mistakenly recorded my vote as NAY when I should have voted YEA.

**NATIONAL AMUSEMENT PARK
RIDE SAFETY ACT**

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act. This month, 22 patrons were suspended in the air for two hours on a pinwheel ride at Knott's Berry Farm in Orange County, California. Incidents like the Knott's Berry Farm accident happen far too often, and it is time for the federal government to start regulating permanently affixed amusement park rides to protect the American public. This should never have happened and was preventable. I believe that we need better oversight and enforcement of existing laws, and we also need to close the gap in coverage, particularly since there is currently no federal oversight of permanently affixed amusement park ride safety. That's why I'm introducing this legislation today.

Over 300 million people visit amusement parks every year in the United States. From school groups to family vacations, amusement parks are an integral part of our culture and have a significant impact on our economy. Ensuring that every rider has a safe experience on these rides is of paramount importance.

The National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act will investigate accidents, develop and enforce action plans to correct defects, help improve safety training for ride operators, and act as a national clearinghouse for accidents and defect data. These enforcement efforts would be under the jurisdiction of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and would increase their budget to ensure that experts in the commission can effectively develop safety standards for permanently affixed amusement park rides.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation and ensuring every American can enjoy a safe experience on permanently affixed amusement park rides.

**RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF
ANGIE GIANCARLO**

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Angie Giancarlo, who recently retired from an exemplary career in public service. I had the privilege of getting to know Angie during her time working on the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, on which I serve as a longtime member and former Chair.

Angie began her career in the Senate, including 12 years on the Environment and Public Works Committee, before coming to her senses and joining the House Appropriations Committee in 2011. Angie began as professional staff on the Energy and Water Subcommittee covering the "water" portion of that bill. As my colleagues know, Army Corps projects are prevalent in congressional districts throughout the country, and when they face issues, they are some of the most complicated things to tackle. Angie demonstrated

her mastery at solving these problems time and time again. For whatever success the Corps can claim, a good chunk of it is due to the work Angie conducted on the Appropriations Committee.

Angie became my Majority Clerk in 2018 and served as my Clerk until the beginning of this Congress, when I moved to chair the Interior Subcommittee. Clerk is a tough job. Balancing the schedule while leading a staff through budget review, hearing prep, markup, floor action, and conference negotiations often involves late-night, weekend, and holiday work. It takes dedication and a strong commitment to serving the public. Every year, Angie proved what an invaluable asset she has been to the Committee, to Congress, and to the country.

We will miss her knowledge, sage advice, and humor. I know we will all miss her observance of Punctuation Day—including home-baked punctuation cupcakes—and I will personally miss her uncanny ability to provide a miniature candy bar at just the right time. I thank Angie for everything. I am proud of the work we accomplished together, and I know she will have a great time whenever she travels to Idaho, and I wish her the very best.

HONORING THE LIFE OF GEORGE HAMLIN

HON. JOSEPH D. MORELLE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and honor the life of George Hamlin, who passed away last month. His distinguished career and military service have left a profound impact on the Greater Rochester community, New York State, and the nation.

George Hamlin's life of service began in uniform. He served in the United States Air Force from 1963 to 1969, where he flew 100 combat missions over North Vietnam. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and 10 Air Medals for his dedication, skill, and valor. After finishing combat service, he attended the Navy's prestigious Top Gun Academy where he finished at the top of his class. The United States of America thanks him for his service to our Nation.

After being honorably discharged at the rank of Captain, Mr. Hamlin returned home and, in 1979, became CEO of the Canandaigua National Bank and Trust. He would go on to lead the bank—which has been in the Hamlin family since 1887—for 45 years. Under his leadership, the bank's portfolio grew to control billions of dollars in assets. He also played an influential role within the banking industry, serving on the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Buffalo Branch Board of the Federal Reserve.

Along with his success in business, George was dedicated to the Greater Rochester community, volunteering his time and counsel to a multitude of community organizations, including the University of Rochester Medical Center, New York Kitchen, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and many others. George was also active within the arts and education community, serving as a member of the acting group for the Bristol Valley Theater. His consistent devotion to serving our community

made an indelible impact on people across the Rochester region.

George was a patriot, community leader, banker, and most importantly a husband and father. I give my condolences to his wife, Mary, and children, Sherrod, Frank, and Alex, during this difficult time. May he rest in peace.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KATIE PORTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my votes on Roll Call No. 474, Roll Call No. 475, and Roll Call No. 476 on November 20, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 474, YEA on Roll Call No. 475, and YEA on Roll Call No. 476.

RECOGNIZING DELPHINE KLAPUT'S SERVICE TO HER NATION AND HER COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Delphine Klaput of Ypsilanti, Michigan, on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Her century of service to her family, community, and Nation is worthy of commendation.

Delphine was born on November 23, 1924, in the small coal mining town of Cadogan, Pennsylvania. She was aware of the nastiness of war as her father, Angelo, served during World War I and was exposed to mustard gas, suffering side-effects from that exposure for the rest of his life.

Delphine met her future husband, George, while in high school. George and his twin brother, Joseph, joined the Army Air Corps in 1942 where they flew missions over Europe as gunners in B-17 bombers during World War II. During that time, Delphine dropped out of high school and moved to Baltimore, Maryland, to live with her uncle. Delphine's uncle got her a position as a classified documents clerk at the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company, where her daily duties consisted of keeping track of plans and small parts for the aircraft and distributing them to the appropriate people in the plant. Some of the plans she ferried around were classified as top secret.

Delphine and George were married in 1944 when he returned from Europe. They moved to Denver, Colorado, when George was stationed at Lowry Air Force Base. After a short stop in Greenville, Mississippi, they moved back to Cadogan, where their first three children, Sandra, Jerry, and Diana, were born.

In 1952, George and Delphine moved their family to Royal Oak, Michigan, where they had two more children, Cheryl and Mary Jane. Delphine was a stay-at-home mom while their children were growing up and sewed clothes and crocheted in her spare time. When her children were older, she took a job at the local clothes cleaner doing alterations. She also started volunteering at the nearby senior center. In her mid-70s, Delphine went to work at

Costco doing demonstrations for 16 years. In April of this year, Delphine along with a delegation of 27 original Rosies went to Washington, DC, where they were presented with Congressional Gold Medals, honoring all Rosie the Riveters for their service during World War II.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the 100th birthday of Delphine Klaput, a woman who answered the call of duty at the tender age of 18 and served our country with dignity in its darkest hours. We thank her for her service and wish her much laughter and blessings in her 101st year.

HONORING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER CHRISTOPHER CROWLEY

HON. SHARICE DAVIDS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Warrant Officer Christopher Crowley, who has been awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. As a dustoff pilot veteran of the United States Army, CW2 Crowley is a hero to his fellow service members and a source of pride for our country.

In 1967, while CW2 Crowley was a pre-med student at Duke University, he decided to enlist in the United States Army to serve as a dustoff pilot. Dustoff pilots flew unarmed helicopter rescues of wounded soldiers and civilians from combat zones and were among the most perilous operations of the Vietnam War. These missions carried immense risk, with casualty rates exceeding 30 percent for pilots and crews. CW2 Crowley trained to be a dustoff pilot at the Army Aviation School at Fort Stewart, Georgia, where he stood out as an exceptional student. Given CW2 Crowley's aptitude, his classmates and instructors recognized and awarded him the Guidon of Merit, a ceremonial banner which acknowledges excellence in leadership, skill, and performance among Army Warrant Officer candidates.

Throughout his career, CW2 Crowley flew over 1,000 missions, rescuing more than 3,000 wounded personnel in unarmed helicopters under extreme conditions. For his extraordinary bravery, he was twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and received the Air Medal for heroism while participating in aerial flight. His courage and selflessness in the face of constant danger reflect the highest ideals of military service, earning him the well-deserved recognition of the Congressional Gold Medal.

I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking CW2 Crowley for his service to our country. He is a true patriot and a shining example of courage and dedication.

OHIO GERRYMANDERING: A BRIEF AND AWFUL HISTORY OF THE VERY RECENT PAST

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Ohio citizens right now are represented by unconstitutionally

gerrymandered state lawmakers. The politicians in the General Assembly in Columbus are occupying unconstitutionally gerrymandered seats. This is not a matter of opinion. It was adjudicated in the state's highest court five times in 2021 and 2022.

After those decisions, an anti-abortion lobbyist sued to force Ohio to use the unconstitutional maps in 2022, but the federal court never declared the maps were constitutional. It never said the maps were not gerrymandered. It just said that Ohioans had to use them. So, in 2022, Ohio politicians refused to produce fair maps, and then a split federal court forced Ohio voters to use the gerrymandered ones.

Several of the Ohio politicians tooling around the state to campaign against redistricting reform this fall are the very same politicians who produced unconstitutionally gerrymandered maps over and over again in 2021 and 2022.

They insisted on them, and never allowed anything else, and ran out the clock to force Ohio voters to vote under them in November 2022, and to suffer them in 2023 and 2024—to suffer them as we speak.

Gerrymandering is cheating: Politicians pick their own voters and draw their own districts in a way that guarantees themselves victory.

Often, the most extreme candidates win in primaries by appealing to the radical base. Gerrymandering guarantees those same extreme candidates victories in November so they can then waltz into office without ever experiencing a competitive general election.

This means that only a handful of races are anywhere close to competitive each November, and the vast majority of races are determined in partisan primaries each spring.

For instance, Ohio will decide 116 elections in the Ohio House and Ohio Senate this Nov. 5.

Six of them are actually competitive. Total: Two in the Senate, four in the House. The rest are predictable.

Six competitive races out of 116.

That's gerrymandering.

Meanwhile, a recent Baldwin Wallace University poll showed Ohioans have a net satisfaction with the state legislature of –34 points.

This summer, more than 535,000 Ohio citizens submitted petition signatures to put anti-gerrymandering reform on the ballot this November.

Issue 1 seeks to remove politicians from the map-making process in favor of a citizens commission.

Under Issue 1, the current Ohio Redistricting Commission made up of politicians would be replaced by a citizens commission made up of five Republicans, five Democrats, and five independent commissioners.

Ohioans previously passed constitutional amendments to ban gerrymandering in 2015 and 2018 but those reforms, which were put on the ballot in compromises with lawmakers, left politicians and lawmakers in control.

In 2018, the politicians campaigned against gerrymandering, but after they won election they refused to honor the amendments. In 2021 and 2022, they forced gerrymandering on Ohio anyway.

If you average Ohio's statewide partisan elections over the last 10 cycles, including 2022, Ohio is a 56–43 Republican-to-Democratic state. But after 2022, the Ohio House has 67 Republicans and 32 Democrats. In the

Ohio Senate, 26 seats are Republican while seven are Democratic. Of Ohio's 15 U.S. Congressional seats, 10 are held by Republicans and five held by Democrats.

This means that even though Republicans represent 56 percent of voters in Ohio on average, they control 66 percent of the state's U.S. Congressional seats, 67 percent of the Ohio House, and 79 percent of the Ohio Senate.

This is the gerrymandering that was forced by politicians on Ohio voters in 2022, despite a total of seven bipartisan Ohio Supreme Court rulings against the Statehouse and Congressional district maps as unconstitutionally gerrymandered.

This November, Ohio voters will decide. They will decide what gerrymandering is and what it isn't. Ohio voters will decide if politicians should be left in charge of redistricting, or if the politicians should be kicked out of the process in favor of a citizens commission.

To make that decision, voters deserve facts and context, not lies and gaslighting.

In service to that, the Ohio Capital Journal Voter Guide explains the Ohio Issue 1 proposal here.

I have also assembled below for your edification and amusement, a timeline: A brief, awful history of the very recent past when it comes to Ohio gerrymandering.

How we got here:

2011: Ohio Republicans create some of the most gerrymandered maps in the nation in a downtown Columbus secret hotel room “bunker,” ensuring them 10 years of supermajority control over the Ohio legislature that continues to this day. Also over the following 10 election cycles under the 2011 maps, not one U.S. Congressional district would change hands between parties.

2015: Ohio voters pass anti-gerrymandering reform for Statehouse districts with more than 71 percent of the vote, but the reforms leave politicians in charge of drawing the districts.

2018: Ohio voters pass anti-gerrymandering reform for U.S. Congressional districts with nearly 75 percent of the vote, but again, the reforms leave politicians in charge of drawing the districts.

2018: Republicans win the governor's office, the secretary of state's office, and the auditor's office, giving them 5–2 control over the Ohio Redistricting Commission that also includes a lawmaker from each party from each chamber in the legislature.

2020: The U.S. Census Bureau conducts its 10-year census, spurring another round of redistricting in 2021.

2021–2022: A bipartisan majority on the Ohio Supreme Court rejects Republican-drawn Statehouse district maps as unconstitutionally gerrymandered five times.

As a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, Gov. Mike DeWine goes along with the Republican legislative leaders' gerrymandering. Also as a member of the commission, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose goes along with the gerrymandering as well, after campaigning in 2018 telling the nation he was against gerrymandering, and after, as a member of the redistricting commission, calling the maps “asinine” and texting his chief of staff, “I should vote no,” before ultimately voting yes, repeatedly.

Also 2021–2022: A bipartisan majority on the Ohio Supreme Court rejects Republican-drawn U.S. Congressional district maps as unconstitutionally gerrymandered two times.

2021: Ohio Republican lawmakers add party labels to Ohio Supreme Court races.

2022: Republicans on the Ohio Redistricting Commission refuse to follow the bipartisan Ohio Supreme Court's order to draw districts that aren't gerrymandered, thereby running out the clock after an anti-abortion lobbyist files a lawsuit in federal court to force Ohio voters to use the gerrymandered maps. Two Trump-appointed judges agree to force Ohio voters to vote under unconstitutionally gerrymandered maps.

Also 2022: Swing-vote Republican Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor is forced by law to retire due to age. As she ruled against Republican gerrymandering, there were discussions by Republicans about possibly impeaching O'Connor.

Also 2022: Ohioans are forced to vote under unconstitutionally gerrymandered maps to elect our current 135th General Assembly (“serving” 2023 and 2024). Republicans increase their gerrymandered supermajorities in both chambers. They also win ideological control over the Ohio Supreme Court, so while their majority remains 4–3, there is no longer any bipartisan swing vote on the issue of gerrymandering.

Also 2022: A coalition of advocates start planning further redistricting reform.

Shortly thereafter, Secretary of State LaRose and Republican state Rep. Brian Stewart announce a proposal to raise the threshold in Ohio for passing constitutional amendments from 50 percent to 60 percent.

LaRose denies that the proposal is connected to abortion or gerrymandering, but in a memo Stewart writes to his colleagues, he lists only two reasons for them to support his proposal: stopping the abortion rights amendment and stopping any further anti-gerrymandering reform in Ohio.

January 2023: Ohio's unconstitutionally gerrymandered legislature takes their seats.

Also 2023: Ohio Republicans enact one of the most restrictive voter laws in the country. They also eliminate August elections. They make a play to put the 60 percent amendment threshold on the May ballot in Ohio, but fail. Later, they bring back a special August election to put the 60 percent proposal to voters. DeWine supports the proposal. Meanwhile, the Ohio reproductive rights proposal qualifies for the November ballot. DeWine is against it.

Summer 2023: Secretary of State LaRose and the anti-abortion lobbyist who sued to force gerrymandered districts on Ohio voters campaign together to try to convince voters to accept the 60 percent threshold proposal.

August 2023: 57 percent of Ohio voters reject the proposal.

Later that same month, a group called Citizens Not Politicians is formed to put forward a new anti-gerrymandering amendment proposal that would remove politicians from the process of drawing districts and replace them with a citizen-led commission.

Retired Republican Ohio Supreme Court Justice O'Connor and former Democratic Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown join together to spearhead the effort. They make plans to put the amendment ballot proposal before voters in November 2024.

Also August 2023: As chair of the Ohio Ballot Board, Secretary of State LaRose, who opposes the Ohio reproductive rights amendment, uses his official position to write a ballot summary for the amendment that uses loaded language against the amendment.

September 2023: The Ohio Redistricting Commission unanimously passes maps to be used in the 2024 Election, which Democrats say they agreed to because they say Republicans would have passed even more gerrymandered maps that would've likely been approved by the new Republican majority Ohio Supreme Court without O'Connor on it as a swing vote.

October 2023: The Citizens Not Politicians amendment petition is cleared as "fair and truthful" to begin collecting signatures.

November 2023: 57 percent of Ohio voters pass the state's new reproductive rights amendment. Moreover, 57 percent pass a new law for adult-use recreational marijuana.

July 2024: Citizens Not Politicians submits petition signatures, and 535,000 signatures are certified, putting Issue 1 redistricting reform on the November 2024 ballot.

August 2024: As chair of the Ohio Ballot Board, Secretary of State LaRose, who opposes the Issue 1 anti-gerrymandering amendment, uses his official position to write a ballot summary for the amendment that uses loaded language against the amendment.

Oct. 8, 2024: Early voting begins in Ohio.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF JOAN DEZEMBER

HON. VINCE FONG

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. FONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Joan Dezember, a beloved figure in our community who passed away on October 13, 2024, at the age of 89. Alongside her late husband, Ray, Joan dedicated her life to family, community, and philanthropy.

Joan was born in Whittier, California on February 19, 1935, to Martin and Jeannette Erreca. While attending Whittier College, she met her husband Ray Dezember in 1951, a Whittier College football star. An early sign of the couple's complementary qualities, Ray led the football team as captain while Joan rallied the crowd as the head of Whittier College's cheerleaders. Rising to a new and exciting chapter in their lives, the couple married in 1954, and briefly lived in Phoenix before settling in Bakersfield, where Ray helped found American National Bank. American National Bank was acquired by Wells Fargo and the Dezembers were able to focus on their passion for giving, especially to California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB).

The generous support to the community from Joan and Ray enabled the creation of important programs and facilities, including the Walter W. Stiern Library's Dezember Reading Room and the Dezember Leadership Development Center, which continue to inspire students seeking to follow Joan and Ray's path to achieve the American Dream. While such facilities will continue to uphold their names, it is the lives of fellow neighbors who were blessed to know Joan and Ray's virtuous and loving touch, felt by so many in their family and in the Kern County community. The Dezembers certainly believed in the transformative power of education, as their support for scholarships like the Wendy Wayne Nursing Scholarship and the Hispanic Excellence

Scholarship Fund has opened doors for countless students. As a lifetime member and the first Chairwoman of the CSUB Foundation Board of Directors, Joan's ability to help others reached far and wide, earning her the CSUB President's Medal in 1999.

Joan is survived by her four children, Becky, Brent, Cheri, and Katie, eleven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren who will remember her as their kind, loving matriarch who found great joy in the success of others. Amanda and I send our deep condolences to the whole Dezember family and all who knew and loved her. On behalf of the 20th Congressional District, I am grateful to Joan, for what she has done for our community. She will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

CONGRATULATING CAPTAIN JOSEPH J. RING ON HIS SERVICE AND RETIREMENT

HON. JILL N. TOKUDA

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. TOKUDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend Captain Joseph J. Ring, the Commander of the Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific on his retirement from the United States Navy after thirty years of service to our Nation.

As Commander of Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, Captain Ring led the successful transition of the newly aligned MIDPAC team in manning, training, and maintaining all surface ships homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Thanks to Captain Ring's leadership, the U.S. Navy's Hawaii-based ships remain combat ready for sustained operations in the Indo-Pacific and around the world.

Over the course of his career as a Surface Warfare Officer, Captain Ring served in four countries and operated at sea in every Combatant Command theater of operation. At sea, he served as Commander of Destroyer Squadron Three One, Commanding Officer of the USS *Hopper* (DDG-70), and Commanding Officer of the USS *Mustin* (DDG-89). Ashore, he served as Flag Aide to the Commander, Navy Region Hawaii; Warfare Systems Advisor to the Royal Australian Navy in Sydney, Australia; Director, Joint Operations Center (J31), United States Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany; and as Chief of Staff to the Director, Maritime Operations, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

His many awards include the Royal Australian Navy Chief of Navy Gold Medal, Peruvian Naval Medal of Honor for Merit, the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and various other personal, campaign and unit awards including the Battle "E" Excellence Award. He also received the title of Honorary Chief Petty Officer in recognition of his contributions to the Chief Petty Officer community and the enlisted force.

On a personal note, Joe has always been the one who helps "get me to yes." Service above self is a way of life for Joe, and the values we cherish in Hawaii mirrors his own. While his Navy service brought him to Hawaii, we know our islands are a place he loves and protects as his home.

As Joe, Nada, and their entire family transition to a new chapter, I proudly join them in

celebrating a tremendous career that will continue to inspire and motivate future generations of leaders. But even more importantly, I wish them all the best in enjoying a well-earned retirement.

Joe, mahalo for all that you have done and given to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I missed Roll Call vote No. 474 on November 20, 2024. Had I been present, my vote would have been Yea on Roll Call No. 474.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DANIEL T. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend due to a memorial service. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 474 (H.R. 3012).

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR. HENDRIK POPPEN

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and life of Hendrik "Hank" Poppen of Portage, Michigan. Hank Poppen was born in Wildervank, Netherlands, on July 28, 1951. He immigrated to the United States with his family in 1957 and became a United States citizen in 1988. Hank attended Kalamazoo Christian Schools and dedicated much of his life to serving the Kalamazoo and Portage communities.

In 1989, Hank found a lifelong passion when he and his son Brian joined Boy Scout Troop 244, where he then became the Scout Leader. Through the years Hank watched his son, daughter, granddaughter, and 175 other scouts rise to Eagle Scout. He took his beloved troop on hundreds of trips throughout the United States, even when his health failed him.

Hank was a remarkable individual characterized by his faith and love for his community. Most of all, he loved his family. On November 12, 2024, at the age of 73, Hank passed away surrounded by the people he loved most. He is survived by his children, grandchildren, siblings, dearest friends, and the many scouts, students, and people he impacted throughout his life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in cherishing the memory of Hendrik Poppen. His dedication to his community, family, and friends, was unwavering, and his character will be remembered in the highest order.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I could not be present for the vote on H.R. 3012—North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act of 2023. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 474.

GERRYMANDERING

HON. ALMA S. ADAMS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Census seeks to count every American, every ten years. They do this so that every American may be equally represented and heard in this chamber by one of us. Friends, colleagues, Democrats, and Republicans, I submit this statement tonight, because nearly 250 years after our founding, the people of North Carolina are still not being fairly heard on this floor.

Before the first US Census count was conducted in 1790, North Carolina lawmakers, who looked nothing like me to say the least, joined with other representatives from southern states in advocating that African-American slaves be counted as “three-fifths” of a resident. More residents meant more congressional power. So they wanted our ancestors to count—but they denied them the vote. They wanted our bodies, but not our voices.

The echoes of that anti-democratic sentiment live today through gerrymandering. The effects of it are felt by all North Carolina voters and indeed, most voters around the country. The people of Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, and Florida are not being fairly heard on this floor.

To this day, the practice of gerrymandering drags the feet of our democracy, back to the early days of our nation when most of our citizens did not have a voice. The New Majority is built on it, but both parties are complicit in it. I am standing on this tonight, because I won’t stand for it anymore.

Gerrymandering does more than sand the gears of our democracy. It harms our ability to govern. We can count people a lot faster than we could in 1790, but there’s a reason the Census is only done every ten years. The long stability period gives us time to get to know our constituents, their needs, and the needs of the land, businesses, and organizations therein. It’s why it’s important that these districts represent cohesive communities. But that stability in governance has not been the case for my constituents, or for most in North Carolina.

The Republican Majority in the North Carolina General Assembly engaged in political pornography to stack congressional districts in their favor, locking 10 of our 14 congressional districts into Republican control in a state that voted 50–50 for the US House.

Over the past ten years of my service, this district has undergone changes in 2016, 2020, 2022, and now here in 2024. My first district looked something like a potted plant, growing along I-85 from Charlotte to Greensboro. If I knew then my district would evolve four more

times, I might have traded my house for an RV. Starting in January I’ll have served the fifth configuration of my district in ten years. Most of you in this chamber who’ve served as long as I have, have served just two in that same time period.

Think about what serving five different districts does to our efforts at governance. Every year I give a State of the District speech, and I’m either saying goodbye or introducing myself to half my constituents. Many are surprised to hear from me.

Frequently redrawn districts mean weakened and less effective governance. Constituents need a representative in Congress often for basic help with federal services, like their Social Security checks, unemployment insurance, Veterans benefits, passport services, etc. Constantly scrambling relationships between offices and constituents hurts this process, and hurts our constituents. Worse, it undermines the basic faith Americans have in democracy.

The problem is especially bad in Charlotte, one of the Nation’s fastest-growing cities, where many inhabitants relocated from elsewhere and feel especially disengaged with local politics. As hospitable southerners, our state leaders should take responsibility for changing this. Unfortunately, perpetuating it is more in line with our history.

State-level lawmakers are egged on by their counterparts and former colleagues here in Washington. They think they are here to deliver for a party agenda, but let me tell you, we are not here to govern for ourselves or for a party. We’re here to govern for the people. America has never been about those in power, but about the work to make a more perfect union.

And there are answers.

While it took nearly 200 years, the sons and daughters of former slaves did eventually realize their right to help choose the representatives who walk these halls tonight. As the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

Legal standards for fairly drawn districts are not rocket science. The process worked—in Michigan, in Pennsylvania, and even, for a brief time, in North Carolina. National standards would be imperfect, but far greater than the status quo. They would ensure that the 330 million Americans we counted in 2020 are divided into 435 equally numbered, fairly and transparently drawn, more competitive districts that are representative of real communities. They would give us as representatives time to get to know our constituents, and maybe even solve a few more of their problems, too.

While North Carolina Republicans have chosen party power over the cultivation of democracy, cynicism over faith in the people, and their newfound fears over whatever once inspired them to public service, the people will win in the end.

Democracy will always have the last word.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes on November 20 and 21, 2024.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 474; YEA on Roll Call No. 475; YEA on Roll Call No. 476; NAY on Roll Call No. 477; and YEA on Roll Call No. 478.

CONGRATULATING OFFICER CHUONG VO OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA FOR HIS RETIREMENT AND YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. MICHELLE STEEL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincerest congratulations to retiring police Officer Chuong Vo.

Officer Vo has served as a law enforcement officer for 28 years, proudly defending his community and uplifting his neighbors.

Officer Vo’s career has been defined by a legacy of honor, hard work, and love of his community. I’m sure he will be greatly missed by the department.

In addition to his time in law enforcement, Officer Vo has also served on the Cerritos City Council, the Cerritos Community Safety Committee, as well as Mayor Pro Tem and the Mayor of Cerritos.

I congratulate Officer Vo and I sincerely hope he enjoys the next chapter in his retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD McCORMICK

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mr. McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, after giving prior notice to House leadership, I was not present for floor votes on November 20, 2024 while attending to a personal matter.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 474; YEA on Roll Call No. 475; and YEA on Roll Call No. 476.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF MS. MILLISA GARY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Millisa Gary for her leadership and countless contributions over the course of her career in service of the American people.

Ms. Gary started her career in public service in 1973 when, as a junior in high school, she accepted a position at the U.S. Department of Defense as an accounting assistant. She later earned a Bachelor of Science from George Mason University and a Master of Business Administration from Averett University. Throughout the last 50 years, Ms. Gary has been a true asset within the federal workforce—providing leadership, guidance, and friendship to all who had the privilege of working with her.

Since Ms. Gary began her distinguished career in federal service more than five decades ago, she has served at numerous agencies including the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Congress through her role on the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. She currently serves as the U.S. General Services Administration's AbilityOne Program Executive where she provides valuable oversight and expertise.

Ms. Gary has demonstrated expectational leadership. In her current role, she helped expand employment opportunities for Americans who are blind or disabled. By partnering with more than 600 nonprofit agencies, she created pathways to meaningful employment, thereby transforming lives and reinforcing the federal government's commitment to inclusivity.

Today, I congratulate Ms. Gary on her contributions, which will have a lasting impact on the federal workforce. Her exceptional career set a standard of excellence and innovation that will help inspire her colleagues and future leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in honoring the retirement of Ms. Gary. I wish her the best as she retires after more than 50 years of public service.

CELEBRATING GENESIS OF ANN ARBOR ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR FOUNDING

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding

of Genesis of Ann Arbor in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Housing both a Jewish and a Episcopal congregation, Genesis of Ann Arbor exemplifies interfaith understanding, cooperation, and friendship. For the past five decades, Genesis has been a beacon of hope, tolerance, and community in southeast Michigan.

In 1969, Temple Beth Emeth moved into the building housing St. Clare's Episcopal Church. While their relationship was always harmonious, by 1974, the members of Temple Beth Emeth felt that their congregation had grown large enough to warrant its own synagogue. St. Clare's Reverend, Doug Evert, offered to Temple Beth Emeth's Rabbi, Bruce Warshal, that the two congregations become one legal entity. The offer was accepted, and Genesis of Ann Arbor was founded in 1975.

From the time that the two congregations began their relationship, Genesis of Ann Arbor was a ray of light during the tumultuous 1960's and 1970's. The congregations continued to grow, and Temple Beth Emeth is now the largest Jewish congregation in Washtenaw County, Michigan. These congregations were, and still are, a reminder that whatever their differences may be, two communities can come together around an understanding of shared principles. This includes an annual pulpit exchange between the two congregations' clergy as well as a joint Thanksgiving service. Every year over Thanksgiving, they jointly host the Rotating Shelter, which provides a weeklong overnight shelter for men experiencing homelessness. A local non-profit food bank, Food Gatherers, has hosted its Back Door Food Pantry there for several years, where members of both the church and the synagogue donate to and volunteer at the food pantry.

Since its founding, Genesis of Ann Arbor has shown that the joining of two congrega-

tions can reinforce common values while maintaining distinct religious traditions. Over the decades, the members of Genesis have fought for a wide range of goals rooted in those values, from advancing racial justice to combating the climate crisis. Their commitment to the environment is proven by only using renewable energy to power the building by the large solar panel array they had installed on their roof as well as switching from gas heat to geothermal heating and cooling. Two years ago, the congregations organized their first annual Ann Arbor Climate Teach-In at Genesis. The event served as an opportunity to draw environmental advocates together to discuss important climate issues, and I have sincerely enjoyed participating both years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of Genesis of Ann Arbor. Its members represent the spirit of America, serving their community and promoting peace, and understanding, all while worshipping in their own way. We wish them the best in the years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KATIE PORTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 21, 2024

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be present to cast my vote on Roll Call No. 465 on November 15, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.