

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DR. THOMAS G. LUM, SPECIALIST IN ASIAN AFFAIRS AT THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Thomas G. Lum, a Specialist in Asian Affairs at the Congressional Research Service (CRS), for his distinguished career in service to Congress.

Tom retires on December 31st after more than a quarter century with CRS, throughout which he has provided exceptional contributions to Congress as an expert on various critical issues. His areas of expertise have included human rights and social control in the People's Republic of China (PRC), U.S. foreign assistance to the Indo-Pacific region, and U.S. policy in the Pacific Islands, the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos.

As just one example of Tom's work, he brought a deep understanding of the United States' historical relationship with the Freely Associated States (FAS) to bear in assisting Congress' understanding and evaluation of the role of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau in protecting U.S. national security. He made especially vital contributions to the renewal of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) in 2003, 2004 and 2023. One of the rare U.S. experts with experience analyzing multiple generations of the COFA, Tom provided Members of Congress with detailed analysis of the Compacts and the policy debates around them, helping Congress shape and conduct oversight of their implementation. I can personally attest to Tom's unseen but major hand in developing and passing the COFA renewal of 2023.

Congress also has relied on Tom for exceptional support on issues related to civil and human rights in the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party's extensive efforts at social control. Having received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California at Santa Barbara and written an important book—*Problems of Democratization in China*—on this issue, Tom came to Congress in 1999 with expertise he further honed on the job. His analysis of the PRC's evolving society amplified Congress' understanding of the country and contributed to a far more informed and sophisticated policy discussion on related issues. Again, I found his briefings, which were really more deep discussions, not only highly insightful but prescient.

Tom's passion for his work and his dedication to providing authoritative, non-partisan analysis to support Congress' legislative and oversight functions have been invaluable. His deep understanding of U.S. foreign assistance in the Indo-Pacific region was also of great help to Congress.

Congress has benefitted enormously from Tom's large body of work and his steadfast

commitment, in fact passion, to providing Members and Congressional staff outstanding consultative support. Over the course of his career, Tom's analysis informed numerous pieces of legislation, including on such issues as the PRC's use of forced labor, the oppression of China's Uyghur minority, the U.S. alliance with the Philippines and support for FAS immigrants in the United States.

His calm, easy-going demeanor and his understated yet ever-present sense of humor made him a great pleasure for his colleagues and the Congressional community to work with. In addition, his commitment to collaboration and to mentoring colleagues has made an indelible contribution to the CRS that will far outlast his service.

For our Congress and our country, I extend my gratitude and warm mahalo to Tom Lum for his outstanding contributions. We in Congress offer him best wishes in his retirement.

HONORING SENATOR KAY PATTERSON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, my deepest sympathy to the family of Senator Kay Patterson. We were both elected in the State Senate Class of 1984 and developed a friendship, despite ideological differences. I cherish our co-sponsoring of legislation to encourage UPS job creation at Columbia Airport, presented as the 'Lion And The Lamb Bill.'

I include in the RECORD the obituary of Senator Kay Patterson.

Former state Sen. Kay Patterson, known for his colorful language and wit, died Friday after being sick, sources with knowledge confirmed to The State. He was 93.

Described as a civil rights icon, the former Richland County lawmaker served in the General Assembly for 32 years.

Patterson was a member of the state House from 1975 through 1985 representing District 73 and in the state Senate from 1985 through 2007 representing District 19.

"His unwavering commitment to the education, civil rights and the well-being of all South Carolinians has left an indelible mark on our state. Sen. Patterson commanded everyone's attention with his wit and wisdom," S.C. Democratic Party Chairwoman Christale Spain said in a statement. "His leadership and dedication to our community inspired me and many others."

Patterson had a bachelor's degree from Allen University and served two years in U.S. Marine Corps.

State Sen. Tameika Isaac Devine, D-Richland, who now holds the seat previously held by Patterson, called him a towering champion for "justice, equality and education."

"As a legislator, educator, and mentor, he consistently fought to uplift the marginalized, amplify unheard voices, and ensure a brighter future for all South Carolinians," Devine posted on X. "His unwaver-

ing commitment to civil rights and education reform has touched countless lives and will continue to inspire generations to come."

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Santee, called Patterson a "treasured friend" and noted how he was a long-time proponent of removing the Confederate flag from atop the State House dome.

"He was a passionate voice for South Carolina's families, serving over three decades in public service," Clyburn said in a statement.

Former state Sen. Dick Harpootlian, D-Richland, said Patterson will be sorely missed and described Patterson as a civil rights icon.

"He was an extraordinary public servant and an extraordinary example for anyone in public service," Harpootlian said. "He wasn't looking for a way to get something for him. He was looking for a way to get something for his community."

During his career in public service, Patterson served as a commissioner for the South Carolina Department of Highways and Public Transportation, chairman of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus, chairman of the Richland County Legislative Delegation, and as a trustee on the University of South Carolina Board.

He was the first Black person to serve on the USC Board since Reconstruction.

Former state Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland, whose father, Isadore, was friends with Patterson, said Patterson was an inspirational and transformational leader.

"Sen. Patterson was a force for change. He was not afraid to speak out against prejudice or injustice, both as an educator and a public servant," Lourie said in a statement.

Patterson taught for 14 years at W.A. Perry Middle School, C.A. Johnson High School and Benedict College and served for 16 years as a UniServ representative for the South Carolina Education Association.

State Sen. Darren Jackson, D-Richland, said Patterson was a politician who could keep the attention of young people. Jackson said Patterson motivated him to go into politics.

"He spoke to us, not at us," Jackson said. "He used colorful language and kept us at the end of our seat."

Patterson's oratory ability is what most remember him for which included his ability to use wit to his advantage.

"He was not a giant of a man until he opened his mouth and stood on his credentials," said House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford, D-Richland.

"Everyone took note when he started to talk," Rutherford added. "He had an uncanny ability to take street talk and turn it into intelligent talk and take intelligent talk and turn it into street talk."

Former Columbia Mayor Bob Coble said he was advised to never speak after Patterson.

"He would always bring the house down," Coble said.

"He did it with a flair. He left you laughing, but while you were laughing, you knew what his point was," said Senate Minority Leader Brad Hutto, D-Orangeburg.

● 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.

COMMEMORATING THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the 10th Mountain Division. On November 6, 1944, during the height of America's involvement in World War II, the 10th Mountain Division was activated to master mountain and winter warfare in order to prepare themselves for operations in some of the world's most unforgiving climates and terrains.

After rigorous training in the Colorado Rockies, these brave soldiers made their mark during the Italian Campaign where they seized German positions on Riva Ridge and Mount Belvedere and broke through the German mountain defenses into the Po River Valley. During nearly five months of intense ground combat in Italy, the 10th Mountain Division fought against 100,000 German troops, effectively defeating five German divisions and drawing enemy forces away from other theaters. Their success in these critical battles contributed to the eventual liberation of Italy and showcased the effectiveness of specialized warfare in extreme conditions.

Following World War II, the division was reactivated in 1985 at Fort Drum in Upstate New York, which the unit has since called home. The North Country's austere environment and cold winters were chosen to host the newly reactivated light infantry division to ensure it was ready to fight and win in every environment.

Between 1984 and 2001, 10th Mountain Division soldiers deployed around the world, from supporting Operation Desert Storm in the Middle East to providing disaster relief in Florida after Hurricane Andrew, the 10th Mountain Division's commitment to service never wavered. In 2001, the 10th Mountain Division provided the first conventional combat forces to respond to the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States. Since that first deployment in support of the Global War on Terror, the 10th Mountain Division has become the most deployed unit in the United States Army.

The 10th Mountain Division has a proven and unique ability to adapt to rapidly changing combat environments. Whether operating in the steep, high-altitude terrain of Afghanistan or conducting urban operations in Iraq, 10th Mountain Division soldiers have consistently demonstrated that they are always able to innovate to meet the demands of the mission. Their dedication, skill, and professionalism have been vital in the fight against terrorism, defending American interests and promoting stability in some of the world's most volatile regions.

The 10th Mountain Division has set a high standard for service, exemplifying leadership, resilience, and innovation. Because of this the 10th Mountain Division is now at the forefront of Army modernization efforts and 10th Mountain Division soldiers are closing the Army's most critical capability gaps including developing solutions for counter-drone, drone, and electronic warfare problems. Over the last 40 years, the 10th Mountain Division has integrated itself into the North Country community,

where soldiers and their families form a strong network of support that strengthens the entire force. As we reflect on the division's distinguished history, we must also honor the sacrifices made by their families, who stand alongside their soldiers every step of the way.

On behalf of New York's 21st district, we commemorate the 10th Mountain Division's 80th year and will honor its past by ensuring a strong future for the 10th Mountain Division and for all who serve in our Armed Forces. Climb to Glory.

BERING RIVER COAL FIELD

HON. JEFF DUNCAN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a piece of property in South Central Alaska known as the Bering River Coal Field located in the magnificent Copper River Delta. This issue goes back to the days of Theodore Roosevelt as a conservation effort.

The United States government has the opportunity to purchase the mineral rights to this field.

This Congress provided the U.S. Forest Service \$8 million to buy the Bering River Coal Field through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, but the appraisal came in at \$6 million.

The Korean Alaska Development Company that owns it will sell for \$8 million, and I want to thank a gentleman, Joe Shinn, and the KADCO board of directors for staying at the table.

We have an opportunity, and I believe the members on both sides of the aisle would agree if you could by acclamation to give the Forest Service the ability to purchase this remarkable property for conservation. But the United States government cannot pay more than appraised value unless we in Congress authorize them to do that.

The difference is between \$6 million and \$8 million dollars, and I ask my colleagues, if not now then, in the future, to help the United States of America to set aside the Bering River Coal Field in perpetuity for all future generations to enjoy.

THANKING REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS FOR HER SERVICE

SPEECH OF

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and thank my colleague and dear friend, Chairwoman CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS.

For two decades, CATHY has committed herself to this body and this country, working tirelessly in pursuit of public service. She was established as a leader early on, and this was no accident. CATHY is a light and a voice of reason. Her faith guides her above all else, and for that, she stood apart. Her colleagues knew that she was someone they could trust, someone who could support them—and they

were right. However, while the country knows her as a political leader, she's much more—she's also a leader in faith and fellowship.

Relationships can be complicated in this town, but CATHY uncomplicated them. She brought people together. I have been blessed to witness her leadership firsthand in our work together on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I built my career in the energy business, and she gave me the opportunity to speak to what I know best. I'm proud of all we accomplished over these last four years, but that's only a part of CATHY's legacy.

I thank CATHY for leading us with passion and grace. I look forward to seeing her journey continue, and God bless her and her beautiful family.

HONORING MARK COOPER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Mark Cooper for his exemplary career in public service and his dedication to education and community health.

Dr. Cooper was born in San Francisco, California, and earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of the Pacific. As a dentist, he generously supported Lake County's Healthy Start program, ensuring that every child in the community received dental sealants and treatment for major dental issues before entering kindergarten.

Dr. Cooper is a committed and hard-working public servant. Dr. Cooper was first elected in 1992 to the Lake County Board of Education where he worked tirelessly to advocate for Lake County students. Prior to his service on the Lake County Board of Education, he served for 12 years as a member of the Konocti Unified School District Board of Education. In 2001, he was elected President of the California County Boards of Education, where he helped shape the California School Boards Association's Professional Governance Standards. These standards have guided school board members statewide, while raising public awareness about the critical role school boards play in advancing educational excellence.

Dr. Cooper's contributions extend beyond the fields of education. Dr. Cooper served as a president of Rotary Club of Clear Lake and has continued to advocate for youth dental health as a member of the Oral Health Coalition of Lake and Mendocino Counties. Dr. Cooper was instrumental in the establishment of the Konocti Wellness Center, the first school-based clinic in a rural community in California, ensuring that all students have access to quality healthcare.

Additionally, Dr. Cooper resides in Clearlake with his wife, Janice. They are the proud parents of their three children: Benjamin, Brian, and Jacqueline. In his free time, Dr. Cooper enjoys playing the drums, a passion Dr. Cooper will continue into his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I extend our community's heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Mark Cooper for his decades of service to education, health, and our community. It is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HEROES: BUCKS COUNTY WOMEN'S SENIOR A DRAGON BOAT TEAM

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary group from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—A team that has gone above and beyond their call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize the Bucks County Women's Senior A Dragon Boat Team:

Deb Bray, Jan Buhler, Kelly Chase, Gwen Coverdale, Bonnie Gephner, Lisa Hearn, Deb Jennings, Kimbrelli Kelly, Christine Kerrigan, Kim King, Cynthia Laggan, Heidi Lengel, Angie Lin, Lorraine Lodise, Karen Lust, Heydi Lynch, Leanne Lyons.

Cindy Manzo, Chezza Martineau, Margie Milburn, Christy Murphy, Carrie Myers, Kimmel Nacewicz, Kelly Noonan, Lina Peterson, Maureen Petrosky, Kelly Quinn, Olivia Quinn, Marie Quizon, Laura Scaperotto, Jackie Squares, Joanne Stein, Jacquelyn Wetzel, Chris Wetzel (Coach), Tommy Leonard (Coach).

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades, but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. The Bucks County Women's Senior A Dragon Boat Team has embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

This remarkable group has brought honor to our community on the global stage and demonstrates what it means to be a champion in every sense of the word. Led by the incredible Chris and Jacquelyn Wetzel, the Bucks Dragon Boat Association recently competed on the world stage in Ravenna, Italy, against the top dragon boat teams from around the globe. They brought home two silver medals and a gold—an achievement that speaks volumes about their talent, determination, and dedication. But as impressive as these victories are, their most profound accomplishment wasn't measured in medals but in saving a life.

On September 3rd, following a grueling 2000-meter race that earned them the silver medal, Christy Murphy and her Women's Senior A teammates were paddling back to the docks when they saw a man in the water, struggling to stay afloat. It was a moment that could have paralyzed many with fear, but instead, it became a moment of pure heroism. Without a second thought, Christy sprang into action, drawing on the same strength, precision, and teamwork that had carried them through the race. She knew every second was crucial.

With her teammates rallying behind her, Christy plunged into the water and swam to the struggling man. With the help of her teammates, they pulled him onto their boat and safely transferred him to the motor rescue they had flagged down. On that day, this re-

markable group of Bucks County women did not just prove themselves as world-class athletes—they showed us all what it means to be true heroes. This extraordinary and selfless act transcends any medal or title, reminding us of the power of human connection, teamwork, and what we are capable of when we come together.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to The Bucks County Women's Senior A Dragon Boat Team for their extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional organization, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May their example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JIM McMILLAN

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Representative DESAULNIER, to honor the life and legacy of James "Jim" McMillan, a devoted public servant and trailblazing leader within Contra Costa County. Mr. McMillan passed away on November 28, 2024, at the age of 96. He leaves behind a legacy of dedication, integrity, and the relentless pursuit of justice.

Born in Mineral Wells, Texas, Mr. McMillan moved to Richmond, California in the 1950s, where he opened McMillan Pharmacy—the first Black-owned pharmacy in the city. McMillan Pharmacy became a vital gathering place for Richmond's African American community, fostering dialogue and action on critical social issues.

Mr. McMillan made history as the first African-American graduate of the College of Pharmacy at Oregon State University. He was also the second Black graduate in the university's history. He brought his pioneering spirit to every endeavor, whether as a pharmacist, mentor, or elected official.

In 1983, Mr. McMillan was elected to the Richmond City Council, where he served with distinction for three terms. He worked to combat systemic racism and police brutality in Richmond, calling for reform and accountability within the police department. He was instrumental in creating Richmond's first police review commission, which served as a model for oversight and community trust.

Beyond his political achievements, Mr. McMillan was a compassionate neighbor and mentor. Mr. McMillan was known for his sharp sense of style and unwavering kindness and was deeply respected and loved by those who knew him. He devoted his life to uplifting others by mentoring aspiring leaders, delivering local newspapers to keep his neighbors informed, or simply offering a kind word and a helping hand.

As a community health leader, he provided care and counsel to countless individuals in Richmond, often visiting patients in hospitals and ensuring they received the medical attention they needed. His contributions extended far beyond his profession. His work laid the

foundation for lasting change, and his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come. On behalf of the constituents of California's 8th and 10th Congressional Districts, we would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Mr. McMillan's loved ones. We know they and the people of Contra Costa County will join us in celebrating his life and legacy.

HONORING JOHN D. FRESHMAN

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished and long career of John D. Freshman, whose unwavering commitment to ensuring clean water for the United States spanned over fifty years.

After graduating from Middlebury College in Vermont, John began his career working for Senator Richard Schweiker of Pennsylvania, followed by Governor (and then Senator) Robert Stafford of Vermont. When Senator Stafford joined the Senate, he was appointed to the Public Works Committee, and it was here that John found himself in the heart of the 1972 Clean Water Act conference. In a 2003 interview with Bates College, John recalled the significance of that experience, saying, "This is the most interesting, stimulating, important thing I've ever seen in my life. This is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life."

John's passion for the Clean Water Act continued with his service on the National Commission on Water Quality, chaired by Nelson Rockefeller, with Senator Edmund Muskie serving as one of the vice chairs. John became Senator Muskie's right hand on the Committee, working tirelessly on the Clean Water Act, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

After his distinguished service in Congress, John continued his work in public service under President Jimmy Carter. He first contributed to the President's Reorganization Project, focusing on emergency preparedness, natural resources, and economic development. John later served as the Associate Director for the U.S. Regulatory Council and as Special Advisor to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, working closely with Administrator Douglas Costle.

Throughout his career, both in and out of government, John remained dedicated to advancing clean water initiatives and investments. He worked with communities in California and across the nation to ensure access to clean water, building on the protections and principles established by the Clean Water Act.

It has been a great privilege to work with John Freshman over the years. His partnership and perseverance in ensuring that communities have access to clean water and his tireless efforts to protect the principles of the Clean Water Act will have enduring impact. I thank John for his lifelong service and unwavering commitment to clean water and to our country.

HONORING KAY GRANGER

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL T. McCaul

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, today, I honor someone who has been more than a colleague. KAY GRANGER has been a trailblazer, a mentor, and a dear friend. As a leader within the Texas delegation, she embodied the best of Texas, and the best of America.

KAY was the first Republican woman to chair the powerful House Appropriations Committee—arguably the most influential committee in the House. The “power of the purse” is no small responsibility, and KAY’s leadership exemplified strength, fairness, and resolve—qualities that defined her career. She has an innate ability to navigate the complexities of governance, always keeping the needs of Texas and the nation at heart.

When KAY talks, people listen. Her voice commands respect because it is grounded in wisdom and a deep understanding of the challenges facing our country. She is warm, endearing, and can guide with kindness, but you never want to cross her—not because she is harsh, but because her strength and pragmatism are unmatched.

As we hand the torch to a new generation, we’re reminded of KAY’s legacy. Her kindness and determination have left an indelible mark on all of us. We will miss her dearly—not just for the work she accomplished, but for the person she is. KAY GRANGER’s legacy is one of strength, grace, and unwavering service to her constituents and her country.

I thank KAY for her unparalleled contributions. Her example inspires us, and her absence will be deeply felt in the halls of Congress.

May we honor her legacy by continuing to lead with the same courage and conviction she exemplified.

RECOGNIZING STATE SENATOR JANET BUCKNER

HON. JASON CROW

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor State Senator Janet Buckner for her commitment and faithful public service to the state of Colorado.

Senator Buckner has been a resident and leader in our community for decades. Early in her career, she worked with children and family as a speech and language therapist. Senator Buckner worked for decades in medical sales before then serving our community as an elected official and public servant.

After the death of her late husband, Senator Buckner was unanimously elected to serve the remainder of his term representing the people of House District 40. The Honorable John W. Buckner, like his wife, spent much of his life dedicated to educating the youth of the district, as a teacher and principal at Overland High School.

In 2016 and 2018, she was re-elected to continue her service in the Colorado General

Assembly. During then-Representative Buckner’s tenure in the House, she was appointed to serve in leadership as Speaker Pro Tempore. During this time, she helped to pass the historic Equal Pay for Equal Work Act of 2019 to prohibit sex discrimination in the workplace.

In 2020, Senator Buckner was elected to the Colorado State Senate, where she served as the Senate Majority Caucus Chair, Chair of the Education Committee, and as a member of the Finance Committee. During this time, she championed legislation to create the Department of Early Childhood and the Universal Preschool program, bringing resources and universal preschool to all children in Colorado.

Senator Buckner has always put people first and believes in giving all individuals a seat at the table regarding policy and legislative issues. She leads by example with grace, inclusivity, and empathy.

I thank Senator Janet Buckner for decades of dedicated service and commitment to representing her constituents and our community.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MIKE MCGUIRE

HON. RITCHIE TORRES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. TORRES of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to celebrate Director Mike McGuire’s incredible body of work as he retires from his position as Director of the Mason Tenders’ District Council PAC and from Laborers’ Local 79.

During his 28 years as Director, Mike worked to protect and strengthen safe, local, well-paying union jobs. Mike navigated the competitive New York City construction industry with grace, all while putting the worker before anything else. This passion stemmed from his 44 years in Laborers’ Local 79 where he worked diligently for other members both on and off job sites.

Labor protections and unions are paramount, especially in New York’s most dangerous large industry. Mike advocated his hardest for the safety of the individuals tasked with building our communities. I thank him for all of his amazing work and look forward to hearing about his next chapter.

HONORING KAY GRANGER

SPEECH OF

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a remarkable leader, dedicated public servant, and good friend—Chairwoman KAY GRANGER.

Chairwoman GRANGER’s tenure in public service began long before she came to the United States Congress. From her time as a teacher and businesswoman, to becoming the first female mayor of Fort Worth, she has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to serving her community and her country.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have worked side by side with Chairwoman GRANGER, and her leadership on the Committee has delivered on real conservative priorities. She has led critical policies that have touched every corner of our Nation—from bolstering our national security and supporting our veterans, to investing in American technology and backing rural America, her work here in Congress will continue to help Americans for decades to come.

Her departure from Congress is not just the end of an era for Texas’ 12th District, but a significant moment for all of us who had the privilege of serving alongside her.

As she begins this new chapter of her life, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for her decades of service and wish her the best for all that lies ahead. I thank the Chairwoman for her incredible service to our Nation and the communities across Texas’ 12th District.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AYANNA PRESSLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to physically record my vote on suspensions. Had I been present, I would have voted YES on Roll Call No. 505; YES on Roll Call No. 504; YES on Roll Call No. 503; and YES on Roll Call No. 502.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LAUREN BOEBERT

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 504, I mistakenly voted NAY when I intended to vote YEA.

RECOGNIZING JOHN HATTER

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and express gratitude to a terrific public servant, a trusted advisor to me and so many others, John Hatter. John Hatter, my District Director, has been serving the Hoosiers of Indiana’s Sixth District for over a decade.

John has consistently given my constituents the support they need when dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense. John is a humble man and a role model for public service.

As this chapter in Congress comes to a close, I am beyond grateful for John, his service, and his friendship. Mr. Speaker, may God bless John.

HONORING THE CONTINUED SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DARREN SILL

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Lieutenant Commander Darren Sill, United States Navy, during his outstanding service as a legislative fellow in my Washington, D.C. office this year. Throughout 2024, Darren has played a critical role in supporting my work on the House Armed Services Committee and representing the proud Navy community in eastern Connecticut.

As Ranking Member of the House Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, which has the solemn, critical duty of overseeing much of our Nation's Navy, Marine Corps, and various Air Force programs and policies, his perspective and helpful insights were essential to me and my office's work. Year in, and year out, the Department of Defense's legislative fellowship program brings highly talented individuals to Capitol Hill who provide invaluable benefits to Members of the House and Senate defense committees. Officers, like Darren, bring real-world experience from their time in the classroom at the various academies and experiences from their time serving on active duty. This year, as our subcommittee actively worked to shape our Nation's critical shipbuilding programs, particularly focused on the pursuit to add another Virginia Class submarine to the budget in the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, Darren provided exquisite judgement in navigating the landscape of crafting such a large and critical piece of legislation.

Darren has also seized initiative in a variety of areas beyond naval affairs that benefit eastern Connecticut. He worked tirelessly to provide insight into our Navy's planned shipbuilding programs, visited with leadership at Naval Submarine New London to discuss ongoing installation and submarine force operations, toured General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard, focused on submarine industrial base issues crucial to sustaining the Navy's fleet, and gained first-hand experience in Connecticut's substantial aerospace industrial base. He also used his recent shore assignment as a department head aboard the USS *Texas* (SSN 775) to provide invaluable insight on the Navy's submarine maintenance and sustainment capacity throughout the calendar year, providing a unique perspective on the challenges at our public shipyards. Lastly, he engaged in persistent communication with the embassies of Australia and the United Kingdom to facilitate various engagements in my office and around Capitol Hill and, most importantly, leveraged those relationships as Congress continued oversight of the trilateral AUKUS security agreement.

Darren's work ethic, diligence, intelligence, and first-hand experience as a Submarine Officer made an immediate benefit and memorable impact on my office and subcommittee staff. He was also an energetic, affable colleague to my entire congressional staff, willing to help in small ways and big ways to serve the constituents of Connecticut's 2nd Congressional District. His thoughtfulness on issues

outside of his Navy portfolio were much appreciated by the whole team, and they will be friends for life.

After his Junior Officer tour aboard USS *Scranton* (SSN 756), a department head tour on USS *Texas* (SSN 775), a tour at the Pentagon with N133, and numerous stints in Groton at the Submarine Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, I am thankful for his family's tremendous sacrifice to our Nation and for landing in the District of Columbia for the current phase of their life. Though Darren's presence will be deeply missed by both my personal staff and Seapower staff, I know full-well that he will make his presence known as he heads back to the Pentagon to serve in the Secretary of the Navy's office as Director of White House and Congressional Affairs. I look forward to seeing Darren back in Groton when he attends the Submarine Command Course to prepare himself for command assignments in our Nation's submarine force.

Mr. Speaker, as has also been the case for each of his predecessors that my office has had the opportunity to host, I have benefited greatly from Darren's training and background. This recurring process that the fellowship program fosters, strengthens civilian-military understanding for future leaders of the greatest military in the world, which I believe is a necessary component of a strong democracy. Our Nation is best served at sea and here onshore by officers and leaders of the highest caliber, like Darren. He embodies such qualities and has a promising career ahead in continued service to our Nation, and we owe him such gratitude. To that end, I ask that the House join me in wishing LCDR Darren Sill, his wife Andi, and their two children, Dawson and Mckenna, the best of luck in their next life chapter.

RECOGNIZING KAZAKHSTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. JIMMY PANETTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 33rd Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's Independence Day, celebrated on December 16, represents the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream: a sovereign nation charting its own course in the modern world. It is a day to honor the heroes who played instrumental roles in achieving independence and shaping a vision of freedom and self-determination for Kazakhstan for future generations.

On December 16, 1991, Kazakhstan declared its independence, officially breaking away from the Soviet Union. The United States, recognizing the significance of this achievement, was among the first nations to acknowledge Kazakhstan's sovereignty on December 25, 1991. Furthermore, the United States demonstrated its commitment by opening its embassy in January 1992 and has consistently emphasized its support for Kazakhstan's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has emerged as a respected member of the international community. The nation has fos-

tered diplomatic relations, contributed to global peace and security, and driven economic development. The relationship between Kazakhstan and the United States has grown robust and wide-ranging, further strengthened by the Enhanced Strategic Partnership.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's dedication to political and societal reforms is particularly commendable. Despite external challenges, Kazakhstan has remained a peaceful and stabilizing force in Central Asia, demonstrating its commitment to democracy and civilizational orientation toward the West.

Kazakhstan remains one of the United States' most reliable and trusted partners, both regionally and globally, particularly as an active member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This long-standing partnership underscores the importance of advancing efforts to establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR), serving as a pragmatic acknowledgment of the progress Kazakhstan has made and a necessary step to reinforce America's strategic relationship with Central Asia.

Looking ahead, the United States and Kazakhstan are ready to strengthen their partnership through ongoing dialogue, trade, and cooperation on mutual objectives. Together, we remain dedicated to promoting peace, security, and prosperity, both in Central Asia and across the globe.

HONORING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION'S TRIUMPH AT RIVA RIDGE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the 80th anniversary of the 10th Mountain Division's heroic role in the Battle of Riva Ridge.

Eighty years ago, the United States and its allies waged a historic campaign to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany. Pivotal to these efforts, were the brave soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division who embarked on the formidable mission of breaching the German Gothic Line, a 108-mile-long defensive barrier stretching across the Apennine Mountains in northern Italy. Breaking through this line was vital for the Allied forces to advance across Europe and retake control of the continent. The Germans held the strategic high ground allowing them to dominate key terrain, obstruct Allied assaults, and block critical supply routes in Europe. The Allies determined that the only path forward was to scale the ice and snow-covered cliffs of Riva Ridge, which stood thousands of feet above the valley where the 10th Mountain Division was stationed.

The Germans believed these cliffs were insurmountable. However, they underestimated the determination, versatility, and unparalleled skill of the 10th Mountain Division, a regiment composed of elite mountaineers, trappers, and outdoorsmen who trained and were battle-ready in the rugged Colorado Rockies.

In the evening of February 18, 1945, 700 soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division ascended the treacherous, ice-covered slopes of Riva Ridge. Moving under the cover of darkness and a concealing fog, they scaled 2,000

feet to confront the unsuspecting enemy. Catching the Germans off guard as they slept in their dugouts, the 10th Mountain Division successfully seized the ridge. They defended their hard-won position for five grueling days, enduring heavy fighting that claimed the lives of 17 American soldiers and left 51 others wounded. In nearly five months, they faced off against 100,000 German troops, ultimately liberating the Po River Valley which led to freeing Italy. The courage and sacrifice demonstrated by the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division is truly inspiring. Their bravery in overcoming extreme adversity remains a powerful example of valor and determination.

Under the leadership of 10th Mountain Division's former Commanding General Gregory K. Anderson and the current Commanding General Scott M. Nauman, the 10th Mountain Division is valiantly returning to their Alpine roots to ensure the U.S. Army is ready to fight in diverse, mountainous terrains, just as they did 80 years ago.

On behalf of New York's 21st district, we honor the 10th Mountain Division's heroic actions at the Battle of Riva Ridge and celebrate their enduring legacy of service and sacrifice on this 80th anniversary.

RECOGNIZING PA-1's HOMETOWN HEROES: THE QUEEN BEES

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize extraordinary individuals from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize the Queen Bees Group:

Helen Irvine, Kelly Kemmerer, Robin Kemmerer, Missy Kitzmiller, Christina Swain.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. The Queen Bees have embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

As co-founders of the Langhorne-Levittown-based non-profit, The Queen Bees, this remarkable all-female organization has not only served our community but transformed countless lives. They have dedicated their time and efforts to uplift those in the community facing adversity, channeling their collective strength towards a singular mission: creating positive change for those in need. Constituents like The Queen Bees strengthen the fabric of our district and prove that when driven by purpose, compassion, and a resolute sense of duty, individuals can leave a lasting and profound impact on an entire community.

In times of uncertainty, it is the work of organizations like The Queen Bees that reminds us of the strength of the human spirit. Their service, given without expectation of recogni-

tion, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor The Queen Bees not just for their remarkable deeds, but for who they are—true heroes, in every sense of the word.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the work of organizations like The Queen Bees that our communities thrive, and our Nation grows stronger. Their actions remind us that progress is not forged in grand gestures, but in the cumulative power of selfless acts. They embody the timeless American values of resilience, generosity, and compassion, showing us that the future is built by those who care deeply, act decisively, and give without hesitation.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to The Queen Bees for their extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring these exceptional individuals, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May their example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

HONORING MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT ARTHUR "ARTIE" ALLEN, III, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Master Gunnery Sergeant Arthur "Artie" Allen, III for his unwavering service to our Nation and his exemplary commitment to veterans and the community. Throughout his distinguished 26-year career in the United States Marine Corps, Artie has demonstrated remarkable leadership, sacrifice, and dedication. Upon retiring from active duty, he has continued his legacy of service through an extraordinary range of volunteerism, outreach, and community involvement.

Artie's professional affiliations include roles such as Chairman and District 3 Appointee of the Riverside County Veterans' Advisory Committee, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Life Member & Trustee of Post 4089, Temecula Valley, and Life Member of the Marine Corps League, Southwest Riverside County Detachment 1057. His commitment to veterans and their families is exemplified through his involvement with the Veterans Experience Committee at VA Loma Linda Medical Center & Healthcare System and his service as a Docent for the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego Museum Foundation.

In addition to his professional contributions, Artie has dedicated countless hours to volunteerism, serving as a key figure in numerous veterans' organizations and community outreach programs. From participating in "Buddy Poppy" drives, organizing events for the City of Menifee, and volunteering at Homeless Veterans Stand Downs, to his involvement with "Homes For Our Troops" and numerous Veterans Expos, Artie's tireless efforts have positively impacted the lives of veterans, active military, and their families.

Artie has also been recognized for his volunteerism with awards such as the President's

Volunteer Service Award at both the Bronze and Silver levels and the prestigious Riverside Area Veteran Honoree Program award. His leadership in the veteran community and his dedication to preserving the stories and legacies of service members is further illustrated through his work with "King High Remembers" and various speaking engagements.

After years of dedicated service, both in uniform and in his community, I am pleased to wish Master Gunnery Sergeant Arthur Allen, III a happy and well-deserved retirement. His life-long commitment to our country and our veterans is an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing and celebrating the life, service, and contributions of Master Gunnery Sergeant Arthur "Artie" Allen, III. We thank him for his sacrifices, his leadership, and his ongoing legacy of service to our great Nation. Happy retirement, Artie.

CELEBRATING IRONTON FOOTBALL'S STATE TITLE

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the incredible football season of the 2024 Ironton Tigers, capping it off with a 28–17 victory over Liberty Center in the Division 5 State Championship. This is Ironton High School's third state title and their first in thirty-five years.

Finishing the season with a fifteen and one record, the Tigers outscored their opponents by nearly six hundred points throughout the season as they dominated teams from Southern Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

Led by Senior quarterback, Brayden Schreck, and Senior wide receiver, Shaun Terry, the duo combined for twenty-three receiving touchdowns, more than half of Schreck's season total of thirty-seven. Terry finished the season with more than 1,500 yards, ranking him in the top twenty-five nationally for reception yards.

I am so proud of the Ironton Tigers' phenomenal season, and I am even more proud of how they distinguished themselves with a victory in the state final. The Ironton School District's motto is "To Teach, To Nurture, To Serve" and now they can add "To Win" to the list as well.

Congratulations to all of the Ironton community and especially to the coaches and athletes that made this victory possible.

HONORING MAYOR RONALD KOTT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ronald "Ron" Kott for his years of exceptional service and contributions to our City of Rio Vista as both a city council member and mayor.

Mayor Kott's career in public service began in 2014 when he was elected to the Rio Vista City Council. With decades of professional experience in the financial sector, Mayor Kott

brought a thoughtful, pragmatic, and compassionate approach to governance. During his tenure, he served as a strong advocate for Rio Vista, representing our city on numerous regional boards and agencies, including the Solano County Water Agency, Solano Transportation Authority, and Local Agency Formation Commission, where he also served as Chair. Appointed Vice Mayor in 2016 and Mayor in 2017, Mayor Kott provided steadfast leadership during some of the most challenging times in Rio Vista's recent history.

Under Mayor Kott's leadership, Rio Vista navigated significant trials, including the global COVID-19 pandemic. Amid the pandemic, Mayor Kott spearheaded the county's first pilot program to administer lifesaving vaccinations, ensuring the health and safety of his constituents. His collaboration with North Bay Health also paved the way for the future opening of a much-needed urgent care facility in the city. Additionally, through his strategic partnership with CalTrans, Mayor Kott secured millions of dollars in funding to improve Highway 12, a vital transportation artery for Rio Vista.

Beyond his official duties, Mayor Kott remains deeply engaged with the Rio Vista community. A long-time volunteer for the IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, he has provided free tax preparation services to low- and middle-income families.

Known for his quick wit, warm demeanor, and genuine care for others, Mayor Kott has left an indelible impact on his family, friends, and neighbors. A proud husband, father of three, and grandfather of six, Mayor Kott has always balanced his public service with his love for his family. Whether playing golf, gardening, sailing, or attending local music events, he embodies the vibrant and community-focused spirit of Rio Vista.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that we recognize Mayor Kott for his dedication, leadership, and enduring contributions to our City of Rio Vista. His tireless service and unwavering commitment to his constituents have left a lasting legacy. Today, we honor Mayor Kott and thank him for his efforts to make Rio Vista a better place for all.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN JOHN SPRATT

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, my thoughts and prayers go to the family of former Congressman John Spratt. Representing South Carolina's Fifth District for nearly 30 years, Congressman Spratt was already the Dean of the South Carolina Delegation in the House when I assumed office. I had the privilege of serving with him on the Armed Services Committee, where he was a respected leader and very knowledgeable on a wide range of national security issues.

Include in the RECORD the obituary of former Congressman John Spratt.

John Spratt, a longtime member of the U.S. Congress from South Carolina, died Saturday night, his daughter said.

"I am heartbroken to announce that my father passed away last night," Catherine

Spratt said on Facebook. He "passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family . . . due to complications from Parkinson's disease."

Spratt, 82, a Democrat who represented South Carolina's 5th District from 1983–2011, was mourned by President Joe Biden, former President Bill Clinton and Current U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-Santee, among others.

"Guided by his wit, wisdom, decency, and grace, John deeply understood the promise of America, and he fought tirelessly to bring people together to help us live up to that promise," Biden wrote in a condolence letter to the family, according to Catherine.

The 5th District includes all of Cherokee, Chester, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lee, Union and York counties, in addition to parts of Newberry, Spartanburg and Sumter counties.

"Today, the South Carolina Democratic Party joins countless South Carolinians and Americans in mourning the loss of a true statesman, former Congressman John Spratt. His passing leaves a profound void in the hearts of those who knew him, worked alongside him, and benefited from his tireless advocacy for our state and nation," S.C. Democratic Party Chair Christale Spain said Sunday. "Congressman Spratt represented South Carolina's 5th Congressional District with unmatched dedication and grace for nearly three decades."

Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1942; Spratt grew up in York, South Carolina, and graduated from both York High School and Davidson College. He was awarded a Marshall Scholarship to Oxford, where he studied economics, and earned a Law degree from Yale.

Spratt also served in the U.S. Army from 1969–71, rising to the rank of captain, and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, his daughter said.

After being elected to Congress, Spratt was the second-highest ranking Democrat on the Armed Services Committee. He served as chairman of the House budget committee; among his accomplishments was the passage of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

Although Spratt was known for his intellect and thoughtful decisions, he was not averse to going to the ends of the earth—literally—to seek to understand complicated areas of the federal budget over which his committee assignments gave him jurisdiction.

In 1991, for example, Spratt spent 18 hours aboard a nuclear-powered submarine as it cruised beneath the North Pole.

"It was a very valuable experience," said, Spratt, chairman of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Panel at the time. "I certainly have a new appreciation for the very capable men and women who staff these subs and the incredibly difficult tasks they perform."

Camden Mayor Vincent Sheheen, a former state senator from Kershaw County, said on Monday, "I was a page in his office in the summer of 1991, and he was so kind and inclusive to a college student who didn't know anything. He was really a teacher of all things to all people, from a lowly college page to a corporate CEO, and he treated everyone the same."

Clinton said Spratt "was a skilled and deeply principled lawmaker," his daughter said. Clinton continued, saying Spratt "was masterful in his knowledge of policy and was willing to work with anyone to pass legislation that would make a difference in people's lives. He had a unique ability of knowing when to hold the line and when to compromise, and it earned him the respect of all in Washington. I'll always be grateful for the chance to work with him, especially on the Balanced Budget of 1997 which he co-authored and helped produce record surpluses.

John was a true public servant and a really good man."

Closer to home in South Carolina, Spratt worked to settle the Catawba Indian land claim that cleared the title to 225 square miles of land in York and Lancaster and paved the way for development in the area to thrive, the Rock Hill Herald previously reported. Spratt also was instrumental in securing more than \$120 million in building projects for Shaw Air Force Base.

"Serving in Congress with John Spratt was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," Clyburn said on social media. "He was a friend and confidant, a colleague and counselor, and a mentor and partner. His love of country and respect for humanity were always on display. He was an inconspicuous genius and the most ordinary, extraordinary person I have ever known. I have been missing him for a long time and will always remember his wise counsel." Spratt was well respected by members of both sides of the aisle in Congress.

"Above all else, John Spratt was an incredibly smart and decent man. He dedicated his life to serving the people of South Carolina," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-Seneca, said Monday. "While we were on opposite sides of the aisle, I appreciated how John was always trying to find common ground for the greater good. In my view, his disposition and approach to the job represented the best of public service.

John was a good friend, and he will be missed. May he rest in peace."

Spratt is survived by wife, Jane Stacy Spratt; daughters Susan Elizabeth Spratt (David Tendler), Sarah Stacy Spratt (Brian Brennan), and Catherine Bratton Spratt, among other family members. No funeral arrangements have been announced.

Mandy Powers Norell, Trav Robertson and Jaime Harrison were among many involved in Palmetto State politics who shared memorials about Spratt. "Congressman John Spratt was my friend, mentor, and one of the greatest statesmen in Congress—and his passing breaks my heart. He was respected by Democrats and Republicans alike in our beloved home state of South Carolina as well as on Capitol Hill," Harrison said.

"Congressman Spratt was a miracle worker. As chairman of the House Budget Committee, he would find common ground to get things done for the people—often engaging in shuttle diplomacy to garner the support of a range of groups, from Blue Dogs to Progressives. I often teased that Mr. Spratt had probably forgotten more about the federal budget than the majority of members had ever known."

"Congressman Spratt was brilliant, kind, and beloved by many. I will miss him, but his work and his legacy will live on with all of us."

RECOGNIZING THE TRAIL-BLAZING, PROLIFIC SWIMMING CAREER OF NANCY HUNT WEIMAN

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the trail-blazing, prolific swimming career of Nancy Hunt Weiman.

Clearwater Beach, Florida, two weeks after the second devastating hurricane in a matter of days, hosted the 2024 Master's National Artistic (Synchronized) Swimming Championships. More than 300 Master's swimmers competed, the largest number of participants—all

ages—for this Master's meet since the Master's program was first established some five decades prior. Nancy Hunt Weiman competed in five events and medaled in all five.

Immediately after Labor Day, Nancy went to San Francisco to train and to prepare for the competition. Daily workouts—in the pool and land drills—with her Redwood Empire teammates (some of whom Nancy swam with back in 1969 to 1973). She decamped in Pacifica with her current duet partner and fellow member of the International Swimming Hall of Fame, Margo McGrath.

Nancy began her synchro career in St. Paul, Minnesota when she was nine. In 1969, Nancy moved to San Francisco to swim with the nationally and internationally famous San Francisco Merionettes. Four years later, in 1973, she "retired" after some 15 years of amateur competition. She got hitched a year later and moved to Washington, D.C. A year later, in 1975, now some 49 years ago, Nancy was one of the founders of Master's Synchronized Swimming. At that first meet, she performed "triple duty" as a swimmer, coach and Judge.

At the time, the Master's program was a step-child in the Synchro world. As such, few judges were willing to attend a "Master's Meet." So, at that very first meet, held in Reading, Pennsylvania, Nancy was needed to judge. She wore "Judge's whites" as required, but had her swimsuit on underneath it. When it was her turn to compete, she took off her Judge's uniform, went on deck, waited for the whistle and then swam her event—scores provided by the remaining judges. As soon as she completed her routine, still wet, she put her on her judge's whites and climbed back on the judge's chair to continue judging. Nancy also wrote the first set of official rules that governed that competition. Over the past 49 years, Nancy competed in almost every national and criss-crossed the globe for international competition, doing so in six different age groups from in her 20's to now, in her 70's.

Along the way, Nancy has met wonderful people from around the world and had a few "unique" experiences. A year ago, after preliminaries in Japan at the World Master's Championships, the meet was halted for several days as a typhoon roared through. Nancy's flights home were canceled and to get home, she was routed to Tokyo, Paris, New York, and then back to D.C. She flew around the world to attend, compete, medal, and then work her way home. Luggage, phone and medals arrived about a week after she did.

Today, there is one major difference when she competes: she swims with two new hips and a new knee. Her surgeon's office keeps a framed photo of Nancy in their waiting room. Synchro, now Artistic Swimming, has come a long way since Reading. So Nancy is still practicing, still swimming and still competing. Meets in Canada and Singapore are now on the schedule in 2025 and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the contributions Nancy Hunt Weiman has made to Synchro (now called "Artistic" Swimming).

CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BURTONSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. ELISE M. STEFANI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. STEFANI. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the 75th anniversary of the Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department in Esperance, New York.

The first 22 members of what would become the Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department convened on May 2, 1949, to elect its leadership and organize an all-volunteer company. After officially incorporating the department later that year, members held meetings in their private homes and barns as they had yet to establish a central station. The department was able to raise sufficient funding and purchased its first vehicle in 1950—a 1948 GMC truck—while additional equipment was stored on the premises of the local Methodist Church. Years later, after replacing the body of the original GMC, the department was colloquially known as the "Pepsi Cola fire department" for the red and white colors of its truck.

In 1951, the department passed a resolution to purchase land at the intersection of Burtonsville and Colyer Road for its firehouse. Construction began in 1952, and the first on-site meeting was held on May 13, 1954. In the decades that followed, the firehouse grew and started additionally serving as a community center that hosted bingo, concerts, movie nights, fundraisers, auctions, and many special dinners. An extension to the firehouse in 1990 expanded their premises, including a new bay for additional and larger trucks.

Since its incorporation, the Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department has consistently modernized and increased its capabilities. The department formed an auxiliary in February 1955 to supplement their organization and welcomed its first female volunteers from this auxiliary in the 1960s. The organization has continued to grow in both its personnel and capabilities as some volunteers are now trained as First Responders and Emergency Medical Technicians to provide life-saving care at the scene of an emergency. Furthermore, the department's volunteers now respond to instances of flood and storm damage, as well as hazardous materials incidents, and cooperate with other New York State fire departments to assist in emergencies.

On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, it is an honor to recognize the history of the Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department and the generations of brave volunteers who have worked to ensure the safety of their community.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: SHIR AMI REFORM SYNAGOGUE

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary organization

from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—one that has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration I recognize the members Shir Ami Reform Synagogue, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. The members of Shir Ami Reform Synagogue have embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

As a generous charity, Shir Ami Reform Synagogue has not only served our community, but transformed the lives of those around them. In a remarkable display of community and compassion, the Shir Ami members united to collect over 30,000 pounds of food to donate to eight local hunger relief agencies. Beyond their efforts to assist local families experiencing food insecurity, the Synagogue also has a Code Blue initiative to house homeless community members, a vital lifeline throughout our blistery winters. In addition to their local efforts here in Bucks, the Synagogue also collects food for multiple relief agencies throughout the Philadelphia region and host a monthly meal-making project to support Caring for Friends, a nonprofit organization that provides meals to the homebound and homeless in our community and beyond. Their efforts exemplify the true essence of community service.

In times of uncertainty, it is the work of organizations like the Shir Ami Reform Synagogue that reminds us of the strength of the human spirit. Their service, given without expectation of recognition, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor Shir Ami Reform Synagogue not just for their remarkable deeds, but for who they are—true heroes, in every sense of the word.

Mr. Speaker, it is through the work of organizations like Shir Ami Reform Synagogue that our communities thrive, and our Nation grows stronger. Their actions remind us that progress is not forged in grand gestures, but in the cumulative power of selfless acts. They embody the timeless American values of resilience, generosity, and compassion, showing us that the future is built by those who care deeply, act decisively, and give without hesitation.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Shir Ami Reform Synagogue for their extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional organization, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May their example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

MARCO POLO REPORT

HON. MARY E. MILLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disapproval of Joe Biden's decision to issue a blanket pardon for his son Hunter Biden. During the time covered by the pardon, Hunter was working for entities controlled by foreign governments without registering as a foreign agent. According to the House Oversight Committee report, \$20 million in cash and diamonds was paid to Biden LLCs by entities controlled by China, Russia, Romania, and Ukraine, yet there were no Foreign Agents Registration Act charges. Now, Biden issued his son a blanket pardon covering a decade of illicit activity. Hunter's crimes were published in the Marco Polo report. The report can be found at bidenreport.com. The American people deserve to know the truth.

HONORING FEDERAL GLOVER

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we rise today, along with Representative DESAULNIER, to recognize and honor Federal Glover on the occasion of his retirement following a meritorious career in public service, leadership, and commitment to the City of Pittsburg and Contra Costa County communities and beyond. For over two decades, Supervisor Glover has been a pillar of leadership, advocacy, and progress in our community.

Born and raised in Pittsburg, California, Supervisor Glover has spent his life committed to the betterment of his hometown and District 5. His public service journey began on the Pittsburg City Council in 1996, where he quickly rose through the ranks and later served as Mayor. Since his election to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors in 2000 he has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of his constituents, serving with honor, vision, and compassion.

Throughout his tenure, Supervisor Glover spearheaded numerous initiatives that have left an indelible mark on our communities. He was instrumental in securing \$1 billion for Highway 4 improvements and the eBART extension to Antioch, which improved transportation and connectivity for thousands of residents. His leadership in consolidating rural fire districts into the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District enhanced fire protection and local control for our communities.

Supervisor Glover has also championed initiatives to support public safety, economic development, and youth engagement. From implementing safety improvements on Vasco Road to launching youth conferences that empower the next generation, he has always prioritized the well-being of his constituents. His commitment to inclusion and community building is reflected in programs like the Faith Initiative and the area's first Gang Task Force, which addressed critical social challenges through collaboration and holistic solutions.

In addition to his professional achievements, Supervisor Glover's personal story is one of resilience and gratitude. After surviving a life-threatening health crisis in 2015, including a 16-hour transplant surgery, he returned to his work with renewed purpose and dedication. His gratitude toward the donor who gave him a second chance at life, as well as the support of his wife Janis, their children, and grandchildren, has been a source of inspiration to all who know him.

Federal Glover's legacy of service, integrity, and leadership will continue to inspire those who follow in his footsteps. His work has not only improved infrastructure and services but has also fostered a sense of community and cooperation that will endure for generations. On behalf of the constituents of California's 8th and 10th Congressional Districts, we wish Supervisor Glover best wishes in his well-earned retirement and extend our sincere gratitude for his many years of service to the community.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM SCHLAGER

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and express my gratitude to a terrific public servant, a trusted advisor, and a young man whose future is limitless.

William Schlager is my Legislative Director and has for years served with distinction as a member of my staff. He came to this leadership position in my office the old-fashioned way: by rising up through the ranks of more junior roles with hard work, an eye for detail, and dedication to the constituents we serve. William's professional growth as a member of my staff has been nothing short of tremendous.

As I say farewell to this season of service in the United States House of Representatives, I thank William for his counsel and friendship. I am eager to watch William's career continue to unfold. I thank William Schlager.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LOU CARNESECCA

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the life and legacy of St. John's University's Hall of Fame Head Coach Lou Carnesecca, who passed away on November 30, 2024, at the age of 99.

Born to Alfred and Adele Carnesecca in 1925, Lou was raised with strong principles that would set the foundation for his legacy. After graduating from St. Ann's Academy—now known as Archbishop Molloy High School, Lou served in the Pacific Theater as a troop transporter for the United States Coast Guard during World War II.

Mr. Carnesecca is most well-known for his lifetime commitment to the game of basketball

and its players, with roles as head basketball coach for St. Ann's Academy, St. John's University, and the ABA's New York Nets. "Little Louie" was an old-school coach recognized for his tenacity, energetic leadership, and his emphasis on the fundamentals. He was a two-time National Coach of the Year, a three-time Big East Coach of the Year, and an inductee to the New York City Basketball Hall of Fame. Lou's coaching led St. John's to 18 postseason appearances in the NCAA Tournament, including in the Final Four and Elite Eight, and he cinched a NIT Championship title. His dedication to the program yielded five Big East Conference Regular Season Championships, two Big East Conference Tournament Championships, and more than 40 NBA Draft picks.

As a believer in the value of mentorship, I commend Lou for his dedication to impacting the lives of the players he coached, the fans he inspired, and the community he served. The vision of a future we desire is determined by our willingness to invest in others—Lou did it every day.

Mr. Carnesecca is survived by his wife of 73 years, Mary, and his beloved family—daughter Enes, son-in-law Gerard (Jerry), granddaughter Leva and fiancé Frank, niece and nephew, Susan Chiesa, John Chiesa and his wife, Nancy—and his extended family and many friends.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: PAULINE BIEDKA

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—someone who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize the late Pauline Biedka, one of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades, but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. Throughout her remarkable life, Pauline Biedka embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

At the age of 18, Pauline—one of our Nation's original Rosie the Riveters—joined the ranks of six million women across the country, during World War II, rolled up her sleeves, and went to work at Fleetwings Aircraft Plant in Bristol Borough. While there, she worked in the K9 department as the lead lady and guided other Rosies with riveting. According to Pauline: "If you had a good team of riveters and buckers, you could go fast, down the line and get it done!" Following her service during World War II, Pauline stepped up to serve our Nation once again and went back to work for Kaiser-Fleetwing in 1952 during the Korean

War. Her inspiring commitment to service, community, and country continued even after her many years as a Rosie. For twenty-five years, Pauline served as a dedicated Crossing Guard for the students and staff of the Neshaminy School District. A trailblazer, devoted wife, mother, grandmother of six, great-grandmother of twelve, Pauline led an extraordinary life of service to her family, community, and country.

In times of uncertainty, it is the work of individuals like Pauline that reminds us of the strength of the human spirit. Her service, given without expectation of recognition, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor Pauline not just for her remarkable deeds, but for who she was—a true hero in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to the family of Pauline Biedka for her extraordinary service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional individual, whose leadership and spirit of service will continue to inspire generations to come. May her legacy remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT “BOB” GABLE

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of a special man, Robert “Bob” Gable, of Frankfort, Kentucky. Mr. Gable passed away on November 29, 2024, at the age of 90.

Mr. Gable was born in New York City, grew up in Oregon and Arizona, and graduated from Stanford University. He served as an officer in the United States Navy. Mr. Gable and his wife Emily moved to Stearns, Kentucky, where they raised their three children. He ran The Stearns Lumber & Coal Co. founded by his great-grandfather.

In 1964, Mr. Gable's political activity began when he worked on Howard Baker's first campaign for the U.S. Senate in Tennessee. He then worked on the successful gubernatorial campaign of Kentucky's Louie Nunn. Following the election, Mr. Gable was appointed as the state parks commissioner and the family moved to Frankfort. Gable ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate in 1972. When his party needed someone to run for governor in 1975 against incumbent Julian Carroll, Gable agreed to enter the race. He ran for governor again in 1995 and was unsuccessful in the primary.

Mr. Gable was elected chairman of the Republican Party of Kentucky in 1986, at a time when Republicans were vastly outnumbered. A strong and unwavering leader, he began to lay the groundwork for changing the political landscape in Kentucky. His enthusiasm, optimism, and gracious demeanor never diminished. He took a close personal interest in candidates and party leaders, giving expert advice and counsel. Over the years he served as a mentor for countless young people with an interest in politics.

Mr. Gable's wife Emily passed away in 2017. He is survived by his three children James, Elizabeth, and John and his two grandchildren.

Bob Gable was a great patriot, one of my most valued political mentors, and a true Kentucky gentleman. I am most grateful for his loyal and genuine friendship, his sound advice, never-fail positive attitude, and kind, dignified manner. It is my honor to lift up his life before the House of Representatives.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF RHONDA SOLIS

HON. YADIRA CARAVEO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. CARAVEO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rhonda Solis, a distinguished member of the Colorado State Board of Education, who has served her community with passion, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to improving educational opportunities for all students. As she concludes her tenure on the Board, I want to recognize her accomplishments, advocacy, and tireless dedication to our schools, our students, and our educators in Colorado.

Rhonda Solis has been a leader and a visionary on the Colorado State Board of Education. Representing her community with steadfast dedication, she has worked to ensure that every child has access to a quality education. Through her commitment to equity, inclusion, and academic excellence, Ms. Solis has advanced policies that have shaped our educational landscape and improved outcomes for students across the state.

Ms. Solis has been a fierce advocate for underrepresented communities, promoting programs and resources that uplift students of all backgrounds. She has championed initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by English Language Learners and low-income students, striving to create an education system that serves all children fairly. Her voice on the Board has consistently reflected her deep belief that every student deserves a chance to succeed, no matter their zip code or background.

In addition to her role on the Board, Ms. Solis has been active in her local community, inspiring and mentoring countless students, parents, and educators. Her work has extended beyond policy, touching lives and fostering an environment of compassion, respect, and understanding. She has earned the gratitude of those she serves, and her legacy will be felt for years to come.

As we celebrate Ms. Solis' dedication and contributions, I want to express my deepest gratitude for her service to Colorado. She has set a standard of excellence and integrity in public service, and her work has left an indelible mark on our state. On behalf of the people of Colorado's 8th Congressional District, I thank Rhonda Solis for her years of service, her passion for education, and her commitment to a brighter future for all our children.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF U.S. NAVY CORPSMAN JACK GUTMAN

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and legacy of WWII hero and U.S. Navy Corpsman Jack Gutman, who passed away just days short of his 99th birthday.

Born December 19, 1925, in San Francisco, California, Jack was the third of nine children. His father, who spoke seven languages, served in World War I, after which he worked at the Grand Hotel in Shanghai, China. Gutman's mother, from a wealthy Russian family, was a ballerina. When her family fled the Bolsheviks, they went to Shanghai, and the two met, married, and settled in America.

The Great Depression was a difficult time for the family and his father had to travel to make a living selling apples. By the time Jack was a teenager, the family was living in New York. Jack was hanging out with his high school friends when the news of Pearl Harbor broke. Gutman enlisted right away at age 17 as a Navy seaman. After boot camp, Gutman thought he was going to be an aerial radio man—but an urgent need arose for medics, and his training was diverted.

At age 18, Corpsman 1st Class Gutman provided treatment to the wounded and dying on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day and at some of the bloodiest battles throughout the European and Pacific theaters. Gutman vividly remembers when his unit landed on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944. With bullets flying, bombs exploding, and men dying all around him, Corpsman Gutman helped those he could, giving shots of morphine, applying bandages and tourniquets, and providing words of comfort to soldiers who died in his arms.

Gutman would later write a book about his experience titled “One Veteran's Journey to Heal the Wounds of War.” His story was recorded by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana. Jack was also interviewed as part of a documentary film about the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

A quote from his book best describes the impact the war had on his life: “I went into the war with a fervor to fight for my country and protect our freedom, but the experience had been nothing like what I thought when I signed up to join the Navy. Back at home, I thought constantly of the men that had died overseas. I wondered how and why I survived. There I was, a young teenager thrown into a crazy war with thousands of young men dying in front of me. I never dreamed it would be that awful, and that those horrifying images would stick with me now that I was safely at home, and for years to come.”

After his combat experiences, Gutman decided to become a doctor. He took night school classes, and before algebra, would tell jokes. He met his wife, Mary Jo, in that class, and they were married June 22, 1947, a union that lasted 77 years. Once his children came along, he never made it to medical school.

Throughout his life, Jack kept quiet about the flashbacks that haunted him ever since returning home from war. As a band-aid to cover his recurring nightmares, he immersed himself

in his work, including performing as a successful comedian under the name of Jackie Walker.

When things took a turn for the worse, he finally turned to the VA for help and was seen by a therapist, who diagnosed him with post-traumatic stress disorder and helped him receive treatment and VA benefits.

With a new lease on life, Jack began helping other veterans experiencing PTSD by encouraging them to seek support to live happy, productive lives.

Gutman's valiant service to both his country and his life of service to his fellow veterans serves as an inspiration for us all. For this reason, I ask my colleagues to join me celebrating the life and legacy of Jack Gutman, a true American hero.

HONORING TONY FLETCHER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Tony Fletcher, a dedicated advocate in our Napa community. For thirty-five years, Mr. Fletcher has demonstrated unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of the blind and visually impaired (BVI) through his work with the Enchanted Hills Camp for the Blind.

Born and raised in Napa, Mr. Fletcher dedicated his career to serving our community and ensuring that visually impaired individuals have access to resources. Mr. Fletcher's journey with Enchanted Hills Camp began in 1989, marking the start of a lifelong career with LightHouse for the Blind. Later, in 1995 he earned a Master of Arts in Special Education with an emphasis on Orientation and Mobility from San Francisco State University. Mr. Fletcher is retiring after thirty-five years of serving LightHouse for the Blind which oversees Enchanted Hills Camp concluding his career as the Senior Director of Services.

Under Mr. Fletcher's leadership, Enchanted Hills Camp has flourished as a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment where blind campers of all ages could explore, learn, and experience the joys of a traditional summer camp. Mr. Fletcher's vision and determination extended beyond the campgrounds, as he built partnerships with the County of Napa. In 2017, when devastating wildfires destroyed much of Enchanted Hills Camp, Mr. Fletcher in partnership with County Supervisor Ryan Gregory and the LightHouse organization, helped rebuild the camp. Today, Enchanted Hills Camp continues to be a fully accessible and inclusive retreat where blind, deafblind, and low-vision campers continue to thrive.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Fletcher for his remarkable service to the Napa community and the BVI population. Mr. Fletcher's work has had a profound impact on generations of students. His dedication has cultivated a legacy of resilience and compassion that will benefit our community for years to come. It is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

RECOGNIZING PA-1'S HOMETOWN HERO: NEWTOWN BUSINESS COMMUNITY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an extraordinary group of individuals from Pennsylvania's First Congressional District—people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in service to both our community and our country. It is with great respect and admiration that I recognize several outstanding representatives of the Newtown Business Community as some of our district's distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Matt Arlen

Richard Fekete

Kathleen McCafferty

Gina Santoro

Hometown Heroes are not defined by titles or accolades, but by the quiet power of their actions. They are distinguished by their unwavering integrity, the strength of their character, and their steadfast commitment to the people and places they serve. They are the foundation upon which our communities stand—the ones who lift others up, inspire hope, and, in doing so, call us all to higher standards of service and compassion. This group of remarkable individuals have embodied this spirit in ways that words can scarcely capture.

In 2021, Newtown business owners Gina Santoro, Richard Fekete, Matt Arlen, and Kathleen McCafferty approached Main Street Founder Keith Fenimore with an idea to bring our community together in support of local breast cancer patients. Their idea was to host a block party event that drives community members to come out and shop locally, with all proceeds going to Main Street, whose programs help local breast cancer patients and their families with food assistance, integrative services, counseling, therapy, out-of-pocket expenses, treatment transportation, comfort bags, treatment center support, and more. And so, the business owners along State Street changed their exterior lights with pink bulbs, hosted their first Light the Night Pink Block Party, and raised over \$8,000. Seeing the impact they were able to have, the Newtown Business Community collectively decided to continue and grow their efforts and hosted their second Block Party in 2022, which raised \$17,000. And in 2023, in an awe-inspiring show of unity and compassion, this incredible group of local entrepreneurs rallied together once more and raised over \$70,000—the most money ever raised and donated by a single event to the Main Street organization.

In times of uncertainty, it is the work of individuals like Gina, Richard, Matt, and Kathleen that reminds us of the power of the human spirit. Their service, given without expectation of recognition, stands as a testament to the belief that one individual's dedication can ripple through the lives of many, sparking change, fostering resilience, and inspiring hope. Today, we honor them not just for their remarkable deeds but for who they are—true heroes in every sense of the word.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's First Congressional District, I extend my deepest gratitude to these individuals for their extraordinary

service. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this exceptional organization, whose leadership and spirit of service will inspire generations to come. May their example remind us of the boundless potential within each of us to make our communities, country, and world a better place.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RACHEL ABRAHAM

HON. JAMAAL BOWMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. BOWMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I want to remember the beautiful life of Rachel Abraham of Mamaroneck. Rachel passed recently at the young age of 25 from complications due to pulmonary hypertension, a condition she was diagnosed with at birth.

Our community in Mamaroneck and across New York's 16th district is devastated by Rachel's passing. I want to send love and strength to Rachel's parents, Deborah and Stephen, her siblings, Leah and Joshua, and her fiancé, Dylan. I know that they are proud of Rachel's incredible life and all that she was able to accomplish.

After graduating from Mamaroneck High School, Rachel attended American University and was in the process of getting her masters degree from George Washington University. She was also working at the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society as a Government Relations Manager, pursuing her goal of changing healthcare in the United States. Before her time at HIMSS, she worked for the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and ADvancing States and interned here in Congress.

We are all grateful for the contributions Rachel made to improving our healthcare across the country, work informed by her own experiences with the healthcare system throughout her life. Her commitment to public service and advocating for others is clear and we are all better for it.

My thoughts are with her family, friends, and loved ones in this difficult time. Rachel was a beautiful soul and an incredible part of our Mamaroneck community. It has been an honor to represent her and her family.

CONGRATULATING DR. MICHAEL C. BURGESS ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AFTER 22 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate my friend and colleague, Chair of the Rules Committee, Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS, on his retirement from the House of Representatives after a 22-year career representing the folks of Texas' 26th congressional district.

With his background as an OB-GYN doctor and the most senior medical doctor in the

House, Dr. BURGESS has been an important voice on every important healthcare debate during his two decades of service in the House. I've had the pleasure of working closely with Dr. BURGESS on the Energy and Commerce Committee for a long time, and whenever a bill related to healthcare was being debated or discussed, I knew I could count on Dr. BURGESS to provide clarity and insight from an experienced physician's perspective. Dr. BURGESS and I share a passion for our military servicemembers and for many Congresses have introduced the MISSION Zero initiative together to improve trauma care between the military and civilians. Seeing this bill signed into law was a major achievement together and I intend to ensure this program continues in his legacy. He has accomplished some truly amazing things during his time here including lowering drug costs, reigning in government waste, cutting taxes, and expanding healthcare options for folks around the country. Since being nominated as Chairman of the Rules Committee, Dr. BURGESS has worked tirelessly to ensure good legislation makes it to the floor and has been instrumental in our accomplishments in the 118th Congress.

I would like to thank Dr. BURGESS for his unwavering commitment to conservative principles and his sound leadership. On a personal note, I appreciate his friendship and counsel over the years. While his colleagues and the people in his district are sure to miss Dr. BURGESS in Congress, I know he is looking forward to spending more time with his family back home in his beloved Texas.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating my friend Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS on his retirement from the House of Representatives after 22 years of exemplary service to the people of Texas' 26th congressional district.

RECOGNIZING MAJOR MARIO FLORES, U.S. ARMY

HON. BRETT GUTHRIE

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Major Mario Flores, U.S. Army, for his outstanding work on behalf of the Department of Defense. Major Flores served as a Department of Defense legislative fellow in the U.S. Senate, and later as a congressional liaison for the Army Reserve. Mario commissioned in the United States Army in 2011 through the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program at DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois where he received a B.S. in Business and later an M.S. in Legislative Affairs from George Washington University.

Through various assignments with 3rd Special Forces Group, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Targeting Directorate, and Special Operations Command, Mario has made direct contributions to the U.S. National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. Mario specializes in strategic and tactical targeting operations and is a graduate of the Joint Targeting School, the Joint Special Operations University's Special Operations Intelligence Course, and the Special Forces Combat Course—Support, and the Basic Airborne Course.

Mario is also a committed advocate for our Nation's veterans. In 2020, Mario was ap-

pointed by then-Virginia Governor Northam to serve a four-year appointment on the Virginia State Board on Veterans Services. In this role, he is responsible for advising the Virginia Department of Veterans Services on relevant policies in support of Virginia's veterans.

In addition to his military service, Mario's civilian background includes extensive government and private sector experience including being a Public Policy Congressional Fellow for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellowship Program, having various roles at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and joining General Dynamics Information Technology. Following his completion of his next level of military education in early 2025, he will be returning to the civilian workforce while also continuing his service in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Mario has been instrumental as an Army Reserve congressional liaison, especially working with my office to support Fort Knox. I thank Mario for his dedicated service, for his professionalism, and for his passionate service to our country and to our community. I also want to thank his wife, Jazmine, and I wish them both the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING U.S. ARMY CORPORAL WARREN J. WINNE, SR.

HON. ELISE M. STEFANI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. STEFANI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of United States Army Corporal Warren J. Winne, Sr.

Warren was born on February 17, 1931, in Albany, New York, to Lyman and Gladys Winne. He grew up alongside his siblings: Franklin, Eugene, Eileen, and Dorothy. Warren started his education in Rensselaer, New York, and later enrolled at East Greenbush High School before enlisting in the United States Army on May 3, 1948.

Warren served on active duty with the Army from 1948 to 1952 and earned the rank of Corporal during his military career. Corporal Winne was a member of the 7th Infantry Division during the Korean War until his Honorable Discharge in 1952. Upon returning to civilian life, he married his wife Mary on September 21, 1952, at St. John's Church in Rensselaer and began a career as a pipe insulator for the Johns Manville Company.

Warren established deep roots within his community. He was a proud volunteer firefighter with the Clinton Heights Fire Department, a member of the Melvin Roads American Legion Post No. 1231, and the Umpire-in-Chief of the East Greenbush Girls Softball Organization. His commitment to the softball community was recognized with the dedication of the East Greenbush Girls Softball field in his honor. Warren was also an active member of the Asbestos Union No. 40, demonstrating his solidarity with his fellow workers. In his free time, Warren was a skilled hunter and avid fisherman. Above all, Warren cherished his time spent with his four children: Carol, Sandra, Colleen, and Warren Jr.

On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, it is an honor to recognize the extraordinary life of Corporal Warren J. Winne, Sr. and the enduring legacy of his character, self-

lessness, and dedication to his country and community.

RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES ARMY WORLD WAR II VETERAN GUIDO P. DIFRANCESCO'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding constituent from my district, Guido P. DiFrancesco. He is a current resident of the Lutheran Community of Telford, Pennsylvania. Born in Philadelphia on December 17, 1924, Guido is celebrating his 100th birthday today.

He grew up on Mechanic Street in the Germantown section of Philadelphia with his four brothers and five sisters. At age 8, he constructed his own shoeshine box and started his own shoeshine business to help provide food for his parents and siblings. Guido had an amazing singing voice as a child, and he cultivated his love of music when he could by performing at school functions, weddings, and local night clubs. He attended Germantown High School until the Depression required him to leave high school and seek employment to help support his family.

As a teenager, he held several jobs including the Philadelphia Steel Mill and the famous Victor Harmonica factory where he learned to construct and play the harmonica before he entered the United States Army in 1941. He sailed to England on the RMS Mauretania where he entertained the troops with his gift of singing. He landed in Weymouth, England and prepared for the invasion of Normandy.

On D-Day, with G-Company, he landed on Omaha Beach with the First Infantry Division (The Big Red One), 18th Infantry Regiment. He was a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) Marksman and fought across France for 6 months in hedge row to hedge row battles until he finally reached Belgium. He became deathly ill and was hospitalized there and then transferred to a hospital in England. While recuperating in England, he entertained the patients with his singing. He eventually came back to America and continued his convalescence and his singing at the Convalescent Hospital in Camp Upton, New York until he was honorably discharged and returned home in the spring of 1943.

After he returned home, he married and lived on Boyer Street in Germantown and eventually moved to Horsham, Pennsylvania in 1952. He held several manufacturing positions including a plant manager position at Huntingdon Industries for 30 years and Mac Electric in Glenside for 10 years. He was also self-employed as a home-improvement specialist until he officially retired at age 85. Guido was an involved member of the Warminster Lions for many years and worked tirelessly at their events.

Guido finally received his high school diploma at age 93. His work ethic and ingenuity are exemplary. He was devoted to his first wife, Rose, who died in 1976 and his second wife, Kitty, who died in 2019. He is a proud parent, grandparent, and great-grandparent of a blended family including a daughter and

son-in-law, a stepson, two stepdaughters and sons-in-law, ten grandchildren, and twenty-five great-grandchildren. He is a loving role model to his family and is a living history of someone who served our country so valiantly.

Our Nation owes Guido a debt that can never be repaid. We wish Guido countless blessings, and I remain deeply appreciative to Guido DiFrancesco for his life of service and sacrifice for our community, district, and country. His commitment to his fellow neighbors, veterans, and service members alike is a testament to his character and spirit. I am more than honored to recognize him today and wish him nothing but the best for his 100th birthday and the future beyond.

HONORING EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK'S DISTRICT DIRECTOR DEE ROSARIO

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Board Director Dee Rosario as he prepares for retirement after an extraordinary 37 years of dedicated service to the East Bay Regional Park District. A proud native of the East Bay, Dee's journey began at Mt. Eden High School in Hayward, followed by an associate's degree from Chabot Community College and further studies at California State University, East Bay. His deep roots in this community have shaped both his personal and professional life, driving a career that has had a profound and lasting impact on our region.

Dee's career with the Park District began in 1975, where he took on a series of vital roles, including park ranger, firefighter, fire lieutenant, and ultimately, park supervisor of Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park. His unwavering commitment to preserving our natural resources and serving the public has left an indelible mark on the East Bay community.

During the 1991 Oakland Firestorm, his bravery and leadership were instrumental in mitigating the devastation. His steadfast dedi-

cation to both protecting lives and safeguarding our natural landscapes proved invaluable during that critical time, demonstrating his remarkable courage and deep sense of responsibility.

In November 2016, Dee transitioned to a new chapter as a Board Director, where his visionary leadership has shaped the direction of the Park District. Notably, he co-chaired Measure FF, a successful initiative that secured crucial funding for park improvements, wildfire prevention, and public safety—investments that will benefit generations to come. Dee's exceptional contributions to the Park District were recently recognized with the 2024 California Special Districts Association Board Member of the Year award, a fitting honor for his tireless work and dedication.

One of Dee's most lasting legacies is his role in renaming Redwood Regional Park in honor of Aurelia Reinhardt, a pioneering figure in the Park District's history. This thoughtful and meaningful tribute not only celebrated Reinhardt's contributions but also underscored Dee's commitment to preserving the rich heritage of our community and our parks.

Throughout his career, Dee has exemplified what it means to be a true leader. He has consistently sought to cultivate growth, creativity, and compassion in others, mentoring the next generation of public servants to continue his legacy of excellence and service. His belief that leadership is about empowering others will continue to resonate long after his retirement.

On behalf of the entire community, I extend our deepest gratitude to Board Director Dee Rosario for his outstanding service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to enhancing our natural and recreational resources. His legacy will continue to inspire us all.

REMEMBERING MY FRIEND
GEORGE CECALA

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. House of Representatives unexpectedly lost a true pub-

lic servant this week. My Chief of Staff, George Cecala, served with me from the day I was sworn into office on January 3, 2009, until his life was cut short earlier this week, suffering from a heart attack at the young age of 49.

George was a loving husband and father and leaves behind his wife Jennifer, whom he cherished and their daughter Genny who was the joy of his life. He also leaves a record of remarkable and sacrificial service to this institution and to the people of Florida's Space and Treasure Coasts.

Whether it is Kennedy Space Center, Patrick Space Force Base, Port Canaveral or our beautiful beaches, citrus groves or improvements to our highways or airports, George had a hand in it.

I saw both gentle care and dogged tenacity as George worked tirelessly against what seemed insurmountable odds to secure the safe return of abducted children from a war-torn region of the world to their grieving mothers.

To those who worked with George he was always encouraging. When someone was troubled or struggling, George was always there to offer a word of encouragement.

George was always attentive to the needs of those around him—the colleague sitting beside him, the visitor who just walked in the office door, the intern looking for that first job on the Hill, or the constituent on the other end of the line, calling the office to tell George how to fix Washington. George always went out of his way to serve others—the hallmark of a public servant.

He loved his Lord and Savior. He loved his church. He filled our office with stories of delight over Genny's latest achievements and her excitement over life's joys. And, he loved his community, even running for a seat in the Maryland House of Delegates.

The House of Representatives is a better place because of George Cecala. George will be deeply missed.