

Mr. LaMantia has contributed to the community of south Texas as a savvy businessman and plays an active role in many nonprofit organizations to benefit students and education. He is recognized as the Laredo Business Person of the Year at the Distinguished Business Awards Ceremony hosted by the Laredo Chamber of Commerce. Annually, the Laredo Chamber of Commerce awards and commemorates an individual that upholds characteristics of strong work ethic, integrity, a substantiated history as an established business, growth in number of employees, and philanthropy. Mr. LaMantia's business and presence of community-orientated projects have impacted the development and growth of Laredo and south Texas.

Along with a profitable and successful business of L&F Distributors, he serves on several boards and civic organizations, such as Chairman of the Board of Laredo Medical Center, former President of the Washington's Birthday Celebration, Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas, Mr. South Texas Selection Committee, Border Olympics, and Cola Blanca, to name a few. He has volunteered his time at Saint Augustine High School, Boys and Girls Club, and coached the Gateway Girls Softball organization.

His contributions to the area have impacted students and the education community greatly. In 1991, he formed a partnership with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, which raised over \$5 million and awarded over 2,600 scholarships to students in south Texas over an eleven-year period. In 2003, LaMantia also helped to establish a nonprofit organization, South Texas Academic Rising Scholars (STARS), which provides scholarships to students to attend the college of their choice. STARS has raised over \$9 million and have awarded scholarships to 4,100 students from south Texas. He has also been an extremely active member of the Laredo Chamber of Commerce Cola Blanca Big Buck Contest. Mr. LaMantia also dedicates his time with his wife of 27 years, Linda and his five daughters.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize Mr. Steve LaMantia, the 2010 Laredo Business Person of the Year. He has truly impacted the business community and dedicated his time for many nonprofit organizations in south Texas and Laredo.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELMER
LEON DAGENAIS OF ESCANABA,
MICHIGAN

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and achievements of Elmer Leon Dagenais of Escanaba, Michigan. Elmer was beloved by his large family, countless friends and was an Escanaba legend. He was an entrepreneur, philanthropist and an active member of the community throughout his 93 years.

Born on January 30, 1917, just blocks from where his store Elmer's County Market currently stands, Elmer was the son of John and Alexina (Benoit) Dagenais. Elmer started working for his father as a young boy, running moonshine and working at the family gas sta-

tion in Brimley. When Elmer was 17 he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), leading to his involvement in a peace time army program with the goal of protecting the nation's natural resources. Elmer attributed his lifelong belief in hard work and respect for others to his time in the CCC.

After taking on several jobs outside the Upper Peninsula, including a year working for General Motors, Elmer returned to Escanaba and opened a grocery store. The store, still operating today, is now 100,000 square feet and is one of the largest stores in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

As a young boy Elmer attended St. Anne's School and later transferred to public school, dropping out at the seventh grade to help support his family. Last year, his family and Escanaba High School came together to present Elmer with an honorary high school diploma and, at age 92, he walked alongside his great-grandson as a graduating member of the class of 2009.

Elmer was a member of St. Anne and St. Thomas Catholic Church, the Elks, the Eagles, Knights of Columbus and the Lions Club. In addition to Elmer's County Market, Elmer's many successful business ventures included Elmer's Diner, Mel & Elmer's and Elmer's Restaurant. Over the years, Elmer was named Citizen of the Year by Escanaba Elks Lodge 354, received a Lifetime Achievement Award, the Good News Award and a Business of the Year award. From 1957 on, Elmer also purchased livestock at the U.P. State Fair from 4-H youth and sponsored local sports teams including baseball, bowling and hockey.

Elmer was not one for sitting idly by, whether at work or at home. He took special pride in keeping his lawn green and well maintained atop his John Deere tractor, was an avid bowler and a devoted Green Bay Packers Fan.

Elmer was a good friend of mine and my family and our prayers go out to his family. His spirit and enthusiasm were contagious and his commitment to his family and community was inspiring.

Madam Speaker, Elmer was a lifelong Yooper who knew the value of a hard day's work, the significance of a hand shake and the difference a smile and a helping hand can make in a person's life. A family man first and foremost, Elmer was a loving husband and proud father and grandfather, who devoted his life to improving the lives of those around him. Therefore Madam Speaker, I ask that you, and all of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, join me in honoring the life and accomplishments of Elmer Leon Dagenais.

TRIBUTE TO LYLE MARTIN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lyle Martin of Huxley, Iowa on the occasion of his retirement as the owner of Blumsters on Main in Huxley.

Lyle had been making handcrafted furniture as a hobby until he bought a building on Main Street in Huxley. Lyle bought the Blumster Flower Shop, and he decided to combine it with his furniture-making endeavor, which is

now a fixture in Huxley. Over the years, Blumsters on Main expanded and now sells a variety of items including children's books, women's jewelry, and Iowa wine. Lyle would like to see the store continue to operate after his retirement. He has enjoyed meeting and talking with his customers about the store and labels it a great experience.

I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress join me in recognizing Lyle Martin's service to the town of Huxley, and I wish him much happiness and health during his retirement.

PROTECTING GUN OWNERS IN BANKRUPTCY ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to Protecting Gun Owners in Bankruptcy Act of 2010.

This legislation, as it was drafted and brought to this floor, would exempt one firearm of any value or a combination of firearms not to exceed \$1,500 from creditors' claims during bankruptcy proceedings. That's right—this bill would allow an unlimited exemption for a single firearm. Despite claims from supporters that this bill is intended to protect firearms used primarily for personal, family, or household use, there is absolutely no reference to this requirement in the bill.

This means someone could claim an exemption for an antique firearm worth tens of thousands of dollars. In essence, Congress is incentivizing individuals to game the system by purchasing an expensive firearm prior to filing for bankruptcy. While I understand language will be added to correct this glaring loophole, this just goes to show why this bill should have been vetted first by the Judiciary Committee.

In addition, supporters of this bill claim that it is a Second Amendment issue and that it will allow individuals going through bankruptcy to continue to protect their households. While I sympathize with those facing bankruptcy, the Second Amendment protects the right to bear arms. It is not intended to protect an individual's property from legitimate claims during bankruptcy anymore than the First Amendment protects an author's novels or other works during those same proceedings.

Finally, this bill was introduced 5 days ago and has a total of 21 cosponsors. Yet, here it is on the suspension calendar—a process that is supposed to be reserved for non-controversial legislation, particularly when that legislation has evaded the normal Committee process. By contrast, the Gun Show Loophole Closing Act, a bill introduced 446 days ago and supported by 109 cosponsors, languishes in committee. Closing that loophole, which we know puts guns into the hands of criminals and the mentally ill, is something worthy of this Chamber's attention. Instead, we are spending floor time on this.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this flawed and unnecessary bill.

HONORING PATHFINDER VILLAGE

HON. MICHAEL A. ARCURI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in honor of Pathfinder Village, an independent residential community located in my congressional district that has greatly enhanced the lives of individuals with Down syndrome.

On this date, 30 years ago, Pathfinder Village opened its doors, consisting of 7 houses and 1 school, with the purpose of providing a full and productive life for individuals with Down syndrome. This purpose was inspired by the dream and life's work of Pathfinder Village's founder, Marian Mullet.

From its humble beginnings on a 23-acre cornfield, Pathfinder Village has become a vibrant community of 19 buildings located on 187 acres. Today, Pathfinder Village serves as the home of 87 residents, who, because of Pathfinder Village, have the resources and opportunity to achieve their absolute potential and pursue their dreams.

Due to the hard work and dedication of its staff, Pathfinder Village has been tremendously successful in fulfilling the purpose and promise of its founding.

Madam Speaker, I call on my colleagues to join me in recognizing Pathfinder Village and its staff for its 30 years of service to our community, and for inspiring countless numbers of individuals with Down syndrome by staying true to its motto "... that each life may find meaning."

HONORING LAURA ALLEN

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Laura Allen, a dedicated and invaluable member of my office for the past two years. While working in my office, Laura has proven herself to be a wonderful colleague and a thoughtful, dedicated staff member. I could not be more grateful for or appreciative of her hard work.

While in my office, Laura served as a primary liaison between my congressional office and the residents of the 3rd District of Colorado. She was responsible for effectively communicating my positions to my constituents, while conveying their opinions to myself and my staff. For almost two years, she has been the reliable, considerate and friendly "face" of my office, greeting visitors, managing interns, facilitating meetings and handling stressful situations with ease and poise.

Laura was also responsible for legislative work concerning drug policy, specifically methamphetamines. While handling this portfolio, she conducted legislative research, composed and introduced legislation, and participated in regular conference calls with a coalition of stakeholders. Her work was diligent and thoughtful.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Laura was a pleasure to work with. Her positive attitude and sense of humor will serve her well into the future.

Laura Allen will always have a special place in my heart. My entire staff joins me in wishing her the best of luck as she begins her studies at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and with all her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO NICK LACINA

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nick Lacina of Marshalltown, Iowa, who will be serving as the honorary chair of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Marshall County, Iowa, which will take place on Saturday, July 31 until Sunday, August 1, 2010.

Nick is currently undergoing three years of treatment for leukemia. Nick continues to pursue his dreams by studying to become a civil engineer at Iowa State University. It is expected that Nick will make a full recovery once the treatments are complete. He has shown great strength throughout the period of his treatment.

I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress join me in recognizing Nick Lacina and all of the volunteers and supporters of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life of Marshall County, Iowa. I consider it an honor to represent Nick in Congress and wish him a healthy recovery.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Mr. KIND. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4899, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010. As long as our troops are in harm's way, it's important that they have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. In the meantime, we need to be sure that we continue to have the right policy.

I am pleased that President Obama has been asking the right questions about what our exit strategy will be. While I supported the War Supplemental, I have a number of concerns with how this effort is proceeding. We know that our success depends on having a credible, responsible Afghan government. Unfortunately, Afghan President Hamid Karzai has not demonstrated that he is willing or able to seriously tackle corruption in his government.

Furthermore, nearly nine years after combat in Afghanistan first began we continue to see only limited progress in training Afghan security forces and developing the capability for Afghans to take full responsibility for the safety and security of their people.

Of course, even if we have our policy right, we still need full cooperation from Pakistan, particularly in preventing Afghanistan's western provinces from becoming a safe haven for al Qaeda and allowing the Taliban to operate with impunity.

We must, however, carefully consider the consequences of simply cutting and running, which would likely result in the Taliban taking over the country and providing a sanctuary to al Qaeda, which continues to threaten terrorist attacks on America and other countries.

I will work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to hold both the Afghanistan and Pakistan governments' feet to the fire and closely review the effectiveness of our efforts to stand up competent and capable Afghan security forces. I support the War Supplemental because we have to give our troops the resources they need to carry out their mission and because abandoning the Afghan people now would only strengthen those who seek to do us harm. It also endangers the many Afghans who have worked with coalition forces to help stabilize their country.

Throughout this difficult war, our troops have performed bravely and I am deeply honored by the sacrifices they and their families make. Wisconsin families have provided more than their fair share of troops to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Recently, the 32nd "Red Arrow" Brigade returned to Wisconsin after being deployed for one year in Iraq. I was privileged to take part in a ceremony to welcome them back and thank them for their exemplary service. Their experience shows that with appropriate training, our troops can adapt to any situation in order to achieve their mission. We must work to ensure that we can bring our troops back home in a responsible way that protects America's security.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, on July 28, 2010, I was absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 480, 481, and 482.

Had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall 480, yes on rollcall 481, and yes on rollcall 482.

RECOGNIZING THE BAY DEFENSE ALLIANCE

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Mr. BOYD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of the Bay Defense Alliance of Bay County, Florida, whose members have selflessly dedicated both time and service on behalf of the citizens of North Florida in support of the United States Armed Forces. More specifically, the Bay Defense Alliance has been critical throughout the years in protecting the futures of both the Naval Support Activity—Panama City and Tyndall Air Force Base both located in the Congressional District that I represent.

The accomplishments of the Bay Defense Alliance can be seen in countless projects throughout our region. They have been responsible for having more than \$4.5 million in grants awarded to our local bases; they have