

his service to the State of Ohio and our nation on the occasion of his retirement.

It is an honor to join the people of Ohio's 7th Congressional District in congratulating General Wayt upon his retirement as Adjutant General for the State of Ohio. Serving as Adjutant General since 2004, General Wayt commanded the Ohio National Guard and was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation and management of the readiness, fiscal, personnel, equipment, and real property resources of the Guard.

The Ohio National Guard consists of the Ohio Army National Guard, Ohio Air National Guard, Ohio Military Reserve, and Ohio Naval Militia, totaling more than 17,000 personnel.

A 1975 alumnus of The Ohio State University, General Wayt is a Distinguished Military graduate of the university's Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He then served on active duty as an Air Defense Artillery Officer with the U.S. Army until joining the Ohio Army National Guard in 1980.

As a member of the Ohio Army National Guard, General Wayt has commanded and has held staff officer assignments at all levels. Prior to serving as Ohio's Adjutant General, he served as the Commander for the 145th Regiment and the Ohio Regional Training Institute.

He also served as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Operations, Training, and Military Support and as the Joint Chief of Staff for the Joint Force Headquarters for the Ohio National Guard.

General Wayt has led a distinguished career and holds many awards including the Legion of Merit with one Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with one Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and One Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Army Commendation Medal with three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

Ohio's 7th Congressional District has been well served by General Wayt as the district includes the Springfield Air National Guard Base and the Air and Army National Guard Units located at the Rickenbacker International Airport. He has also coordinated efforts in cooperation with the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Defense Supply Center of Columbus. I personally have worked alongside General Wayt as he has been an integral part of supporting our national guard and military facilities across Ohio and our nation.

For his many years of dedication to the State of Ohio and to this nation, I again join the people of Ohio's 7th Congressional District in extending our best wishes upon his retirement and wish him success in all his future endeavors.

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTING GIRLS BY PREVENTING CHILD MARRIAGE ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 2010

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2103, the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act. This important legislation will ensure a healthy life for young women across the globe by recognizing child marriage as a human rights violation and developing a comprehensive strategy

that will include preventive approaches to ending the harmful practice of child marriage.

Child marriage, also known as "forced marriage" is a common tradition in poor and rural communities. Poverty is a common thread in developing countries that carry this tradition of forced marriages. Limited family resources result in families offering their daughters in marriage with the hope of securing a better future and thus, escaping the trap of poverty. However, millions of girls who marry young are instead stripped of their childhood and deprived of their basic human rights as well as opportunities for education, employment and health. Moreover, they are subjected to extreme poverty, hard labor, domestic violence and maternal health risks that often ultimately lead to their death. In fact, child marriage is the leading cause of death for girls ages 15 to 19 in developing countries.

These facts are troubling and daunting. Nevertheless, we have the resources to change and eradicate this practice by supporting comprehensive policies that will advance the necessary education and health awareness that will cause these communities to question this tradition's consequences. According to the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), an estimated 60 million girls in developing countries, now ages 20 to 24, were married under the age of 18. If present trends continue, more than one hundred million more girls in developing countries will be married as children over the next decade, according to the Population Council. This is a dangerous trend that the world cannot allow to continue or endure.

It is important that the United States support these voiceless young girls and recognize child marriage as a human rights violation. This issue must be addressed, monitored, and prevented. The way of doing this is by passing this bill. I urge all of my colleagues to support vote "yes."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, as my service in Congress and my term as Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure come to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the professional staff of the Committee. These are the dedicated individuals who do the research, the analysis, the drafting, the corrections, the negotiations, and the leg work needed to bring legislation to the Floor of this House and get it enacted into law.

I honor them all for their diligence, tenacity, intelligence, insightfulness, loyalty, and friendship.

David Heymsfeld has served the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for 35 years, as Democratic Staff Director of our Subcommittee on Aviation from 1975 to 1995, and as Democratic Staff Director of the full Committee from 1996 to 2010. He has been the lead staff on legislative and oversight

issues in aviation, and, since 1995, has directed all staff activities of the Full Committee.

His responsibilities have required him to master the policy issues involved, to understand the positions of all interested parties and of government officials, to negotiate solutions, which achieve the Committee's policy objectives, to draft legislation, and to plan strategies for passing legislation. He has carried those responsibilities for major aviation legislation, and, since 1995, he has also played a major role in legislation affecting the Federal programs for highway and transit, rail, Coast Guard, water resources, and public buildings.

Our Director of Communications, Jim Berard, has been the voice of the Democratic side of the Committee for 13 years, and served in my personal office and that of Sen. KENT CONRAD for a decade prior. An award-winning journalist before coming to Capitol Hill, Jim has proven himself to be a master communicator, adept at interpreting complex legislative issues for lay audiences.

Jim has been at the center of nearly every major transportation issue I have faced in the past 23 years, handling inquiries from the media, getting them answers, shaping our message, and delivering that message to the public.

Jim is also an accomplished writer, a published author, an historian, and a humanitarian who spends his free time helping build homes for Habitat for Humanity in Maryland, and the St. Bernard Project in Louisiana.

He has been a trusted Member of my personal and Committee staff, and I am grateful to him for his service.

Mary Kerr's extensive communications and public policy experience, along with her legal education, have made her an invaluable member of my team for the past fifteen years. When I became Chairman in 2007, Mary moved from my personal office, where she had served as Communications Director and Legislative Assistant for eleven years, to become Press Secretary for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. For the past four years, she has served very effectively as the principal spokesperson for four subcommittees: Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation; Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management; Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials; and Water Resources and Environment.

As T&I Committee Press Secretary, Mary has executed all phases of a comprehensive public affairs program to drive the Committee's visibility in the national news and trade media. She has led the way to successfully promote the Committee's priorities, such as protecting the Nation's waters, holding the railroad industry to the highest level of safety, and making comprehensive reforms to prevent future offshore drilling accidents.

Julie Carpenter Lotz has been a part of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff for four years, working as a Communications Assistant in the Committee's Communications Office.

Julie has been a welcome asset to the Committee and to me. In addition to her professional knowledge and abilities, she has been a great resource for me in personally providing unique information on Committee-related issues that aren't ordinarily noticed. I have found this to be a valuable service.

Julie is intelligent, hard-working and extremely competent. Her communication skills,

both written and verbal, as well as her editing abilities, are excellent.

Also, she has been eager to learn new procedures and to expand her knowledge whenever possible.

Julie has an excellent rapport with both staff members and public figures, and is respected by her colleagues for her considerate nature and helpful attitude.

Trinita Evon Brown has over twenty years of experience working for the House and has been with the Committee for seventeen years. She has served the Committee very effectively as Senior Counsel for Oversight and Investigation.

Ms. Brown is responsible for the Committee's oversight and investigations of all six Subcommittee jurisdictions. She has a proven record of accomplishment of high quality work, dedication, and public service. Her efforts have led to millions in recouped Federal tax dollars and the cessation of numerous policies and practices harmful to our nation's interests.

Trinita has served the Committee in a variety of positions, including: Counsel for Emergency Management and Counsel for Railroads. In addition, she performed superbly with Full Committee responsibilities including highways, budget and appropriations and Committee jurisdiction.

Her keen judgment and integrity have been an asset to the Committee.

Ken Kopocis has served the Committee as senior counsel conducting oversight. Ken began with the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment in 1985 and served as staff director of that Subcommittee for 13 years. Ken possesses the skills to anticipate, understand and exceed the needs of Members of Congress. He has unparalleled knowledge and experience related to protecting and improving water quality and water resources. His areas of experience include matters relating to water resources development, conservation and management; water pollution control and water infrastructure; hazardous waste cleanup; transportation; and, emergency and disaster response.

Ken has been part of every Water Resources Development Act for a generation. He has worked tirelessly to advance water quality and public health, including initiatives such as the Clean Water Act, the Oil Pollution Act, the response to the events of September 11, 2001, efforts to protect the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay and the Everglades, the Superfund program, and invasive species legislation.

Joseph Wender has worked as a Counsel for Oversight and Investigations for nearly two years. He joined the Committee in February 2009, the same month in which Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Joe's primary responsibilities have included coordinating the Committee's vigorous oversight of that legislation. Joe served as the lead staffer on nearly a dozen Recovery Act oversight hearings and also worked prodigiously to publish a monthly Committee Recovery Act report.

Joe always ensured that Committee Members had the most accurate and up-to-date information on Recovery Act implementation. In fact, I carry a 'pocket guide,' which Joe produced, which details the use of Recovery Act funds, including projects out to bid, under contract, and underway. I have used that pocket guide daily, and am grateful to Joe for pro-

viding such useful irrefutable information. I am proud of the standard he set in carrying out our oversight of the stimulus legislation.

During his service as counsel to the Aviation Subcommittee since February of this year, Alex Burkett has demonstrated insight and abilities as a judicious advocate, writer, and critical thinker. A pilot and lawyer with jet fuel in the veins, Alex has provided thoughtful advice steeped in deep substantive knowledge of aviation and the law. He is a tireless advocate on issues of particular significance to me, including airline competition and aviation safety.

This year Alex took the lead role in planning the Subcommittee's hearing on the United-Continental merger. In the midst of intense conference negotiations on milestone aviation legislation, Alex researched the issues presented by the merger and planned the hearing. His briefing memorandum to Members summarizing the many important issues raised by the merger was insightful and extremely well-written, as is everything he writes, and reflected his steady judgment, natural curiosity, and reliable expertise.

Michael Rodriguez joined the staff of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation as Senior Professional Staff in October 2009. As a 1979 graduate of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, a Navy reserve officer and veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom, and an experienced merchant mariner, Mike has brought a unique and valuable perspective to the Subcommittee.

Mike was an important contributor to the process that led to the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 becoming law on October 15, 2010. During the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and response, Mike helped draft legislation to address several issues related to the operation of the rig. He was able to bring his experience as a mariner to discussions about the accident with some of the Deepwater Horizon survivors. Mike's reputation throughout the U.S. maritime industry and his knowledge of international maritime affairs have made him a much appreciated asset to the Subcommittee.

Also, I would be remiss not to recognize the dedication of our Coast Guard Fellow, Lieutenant Commander Zeita Merchant. With over 13 years of Coast Guard service, she became an asset to my Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, and worked diligently on a wide range of maritime issues making significant contributions to oversight hearings and legislation.

During her short time on the staff, Lieutenant Commander Merchant made noteworthy contributions on major legislation with her expertise in marine inspections and environmental response. Her knowledge and experience were critical in drafting legislation in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the passing of the first Coast Guard Authorization legislation to become law since 2006. These efforts resulted in significant increases in the Coast Guard's Marine Safety ranks; significant strides in enhancing the Coast Guard's ability to manage complex major acquisitions; and a keen focus on enhancing the diversity and Equal Employment Opportunities with the Coast Guard.

For the last four years Michael Herman has served as the Senior Counsel for the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, with a particular focus on emergency management issues.

During this time, Mike has demonstrated an unmatched understanding of the laws, programs and history of emergency management. Mike's mastery of emergency management is reflected in H.R. 3377, the Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Act of 2009.

When disasters strike, Members of the Committee and the House as a whole, including the Speaker, rely on his knowledge, counsel, and experience. After tornadoes devastated Wadena County in my district this summer, Mike's unique knowledge and experience supported my work with the affected communities. He also worked directly with local officials helping them navigate the recovery process and understand the assistance available to them.

For the past four years, Jim Kolb served as Staff Director for the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. Jim's insight and guidance has been invaluable to all Committee Members and staff on a surface transportation issues.

During his service with the Committee, Jim played a key role in the development of legislation to strengthen and improve the nation's intermodal surface transportation network. Jim managed and led the development of the Committee's comprehensive six-year authorization to transform the Federal highway, highway safety, and transit programs, as well as the Committee's response to the I-35W Bridge collapse and efforts to improve the safety and condition of the nation's highway bridges.

Throughout his service, Jim has been a hard-working, and dedicated public servant, whose advice and counsel I have valued.

Amy Scarton, Counsel to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, first joined the Committee staff as a legal intern after graduating from Duke University School of Law nearly a decade ago. Though she left us to work for Congressman EARL BLUMENAUER during the 108th Congress, and then to serve as Chief of Staff to Commissioner Frank Mulvey at the Surface Transportation Board; Amy returned to the Committee in early 2007.

In her role as the lead transit attorney for the Committee, Amy has been instrumental in developing major aspects of my surface transportation reauthorization bill, as well as several other energy and transit bills. Amy's dedication to progressive transportation policies is not only evident in her hard work; she and her husband bike daily to Capitol Hill from their home in Northwest D.C. I will greatly miss Amy's enthusiasm, loyalty, and expertise, and I thank her for her service.

In his two years as Director of Highway Policy for the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Todd Kohr has proven himself to be an extremely capable, dedicated, and effective member of the Subcommittee's staff.

Todd joined the staff of the Subcommittee at a pivotal moment for the U.S. transportation system: during the development of my six-year bill to authorize and fundamentally transform the Federal highway and transit programs. Within this process, he drafted the majority of the bill's \$337 billion highway title—displaying an ability to advance my priorities amidst a landscape of transportation policy issues, procedural considerations, competing interest group dynamics, and the complexities of Federal highway law.

In addition to his work on the authorization bill, Todd has acted as the Subcommittee staff

lead on a broad portfolio of highway-related issues. His expertise, his attention to detail, his discretion, and his counsel have served me and the Subcommittee well.

Jackie Schmitz, Professional Staff with the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, has served on my Committee staff for five and a half years. Her dedication to public service and commitment to sound transportation policy have made her an asset to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Jackie's work has focused on promoting bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, improving highway safety, and advancing transportation research and technology. She has assisted the Members of this body in addressing the needs of their communities and has made significant contributions to the Committee's improved standards of ethics and transparency.

I am particularly proud of the work Jackie has done to advance the Safe Routes to School program, which is leaving a legacy of safety and wellness for the next generation. Her hard work is driven by her recognition that all Americans deserve transportation choices that are safe, reliable, and accessible, and I am grateful for her service to the Committee.

Peter Gould, Legislative Assistant for the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, has served the Committee for the past four years with a high level of professionalism, dedication to serving the public, and a good-natured sense of humor.

For the past two years Peter has helped me craft the Committee's message through speeches, op-eds, and floor statements, making the case for greater investment in the nation's surface transportation infrastructure as part of the transformational Surface Transportation Authorization Act. As my colleagues and I pressed for this transformational legislation, I was always confident of Peter's messaging and political acumen on presenting this issue to the American public.

Jennifer Esposito has been a key staff member of the Committee since June 2004. As Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, Jennifer led the Committee's efforts to enact historic legislation to reauthorize Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration's rail safety program, and to develop legislation to address rail security concerns in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. She also led the Committee's efforts to enact the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, which created new grant programs for development of high-speed and intercity passenger rail in the United States.

Jennifer also has developed legislation to reauthorize the Department of Transportation's pipeline and hazardous materials safety programs, and conducted extensive oversight investigations of the programs which led to major changes within the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Most recently, she conducted an oversight investigation of an Enbridge pipeline rupture in Marshall, Michigan, which unveiled major safety deficiencies.

Rachel Carr has been a staff member on the Committee on Transportation twice over the past ten years. She first served as Staff Assistant for the Subcommittees on Aviation and Railroads from March 2000 to May 2002, while earning her law degree at night. After graduating with honors from the American University Washington College of Law, Ms. Carr

continued her legal career in transportation, then rejoined the Committee in March, 2009, as Counsel on the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials.

In her current role, Ms. Carr has been involved with drafting legislation to reauthorize the Department of Transportation's hazardous materials safety program and has been an integral part in oversight of the DOT's implementation of the high-speed and intercity passenger rail and pipeline safety programs.

Joseph E. Connelly is another member of my staff serving with the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials. Though Joe has been with the staff a very short time, having served a little less than two years as Professional Staff and a Fellow from the Federal Railroad Administration, he has helped instill a culture of safety into all of the federal agencies and entities under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

Joe has contributed to the Committee by painstakingly conducting concise, thorough investigations, analyzing complex data and reducing that data into easily definable terms. The results of these investigations helped transform the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration into a science-based, data-driven Agency. For over 30 years, Joe Connelly has proudly served the American people as a member of the legislative and executive branch. He has made safety his life's work and has contributed immeasurably to the safe transportation of hazardous materials throughout the United States.

I would like to recognize Ryan C. Seiger for his 12 years of service to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment, the last 4 of which he served as Staff Director and Senior Counsel. Ryan has been a thoughtful and dedicated advocate for improving the overall environmental health of the nation for future generations and for taking the steps necessary to achieve the Clean Water Act's goals of "fishable and swimmable" waters. He has a deep understanding of the challenges that remain in protecting the Nation's waters, and has served this country well in exploring innovative ways to overcome these challenges.

I also want to express my gratitude for his encyclopedic knowledge of water resource law, which served us so well in his role as lead House negotiator on the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. Thanks to his work and the work of the rest of the Subcommittee staff, Congress was able to achieve what was only the 107th successful override of a Presidential veto in the history of the nation.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I want to thank Navis Bermudez for her service as Professional Staff to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. Despite the fact that she has only been with the Subcommittee for the past year, her service to the Committee and to the Congress has been exemplary. During this year, Navis helped the Committee develop and move legislation (H.R. 3534) to address many of the legal shortcomings of the Oil Pollution Act and the Clean Water Act that were exposed by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster. Navis has also been integral in Congressional efforts to reauthorize and strengthen several of the Environmental Protection Agency's targeted watershed programs, including House passage of legislation to reauthorize the National Estuaries Program

(H.R. 4715), and efforts to reauthorize EPA's Long Island Sound and Chesapeake Bay program offices.

Navis has proven to be a strong advocate for protecting the nation's water-related environment, and has performed her job with professionalism and competence.

Madam Speaker, the people I have mentioned here are part of the Committee's professional staff. There are many others who perform administrative duties that are equally important to the work done by the Committee. I intend to recognize their contribution in a subsequent statement.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS AUSTIN G. STAGGS

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 16, 2010

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I come before the U.S. House of Representatives tonight to celebrate the life of Private First Class Austin G. Staggs. PFC Staggs answered his nation's call of duty in 2009 after graduating from North Hills Private School in Millsap, Texas near his hometown of Weatherford, Texas. On November 29, 2010 Austin made the ultimate sacrifice while serving his country and fellow servicemen in the Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan.

Private First Class Staggs was deployed to Afghanistan as part of 101st Airborne Division based in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He left behind his mother and father, two brothers, two sisters, his wife Sheena Staggs and his son Kallen Staggs. His father Byram Staggs of Senoia, Georgia recalls how adamant he had been about joining the U.S. Army. It had always been his dream he says.

His family also recalled a loving young man who was adored by his siblings. His father said, "He was the most big-hearted kid you've ever met." His stepmother Kelly smiles when she talks about his Skype video calls to their house from Afghanistan. She said he was adored by his nieces and nephews so much that they would push each other out of the way to see him when he called. PFC Staggs' mother, Kaye missed his last call during the Thanksgiving holidays, but his grandmother said she saved his last voicemail so that she can listen to him say "I love you" any time she wants.

Like any soldier PFC Staggs received great satisfaction from the job that he and all fellow U.S. servicemen were doing in Afghanistan. He served his country bravely and took pride in the fact that the work he was doing every day was touching millions of lives both at home and abroad.

It pains me that fine young men such as PFC Staggs have been killed protecting the freedom of this great country. I know that no words can lessen the sorrow that Austin's family feels, but I am proud to salute such a fine son, brother, husband and father.