

of my life, for allowing me the blessing of serving in perhaps the most august, deliberate, elected body in the world. I am humbled and honored that the great citizens of Michigan and the people of Detroit chose me for so many years to fight and serve them for more than three decades as a public servant. The many friendships, relationships, and associations I have formed will remain with me forever.

I finally want to thank perhaps the most underappreciated team in any elected body—the staff who have worked for me for those years in the State of Michigan and on Capitol Hill. The tireless dedication, devotion and work will never be forgotten by me or the people to whom you have been so effective and efficient for so long.

I hope and pray for all of my colleagues that we may bring a better world to all Americans, and never flinch from fighting for justice and democratic ideals. We made history. We made difficult decisions. We fought the good fight. We have difficult days ahead, and I remain faithful to protecting the Constitution of the United States and the goals of our great nation.

God bless.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEAN HELLER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Mr. HELLER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 658, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 658 (H.R. 6540) my flight was delayed due to weather and had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE 110TH AND 111TH CONGRESS

HON. JOHN J. HALL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 22, 2010

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, I would like to submit the following: As the Representative for New York's 19th Congressional District, I had numerous significant accomplishments in all aspects of meeting local community needs, individual constituent services, and enacting federal legislation on behalf of my constituents.

I kept my annual promise of holding at least one public event in every town and city in the district to give my constituents an opportunity to speak directly with me about their opinions and concerns. I hosted Town Hall Meetings, Congress on Your Corners, business roundtables, issues forums and workshops throughout all 4 years of my Congressional

service. In addition to these events, I attended numerous community events hosted by local organizations, senior centers, fire departments, schools, etc. I also did a series of "work-a-day" events where I worked alongside a constituent in a local job so I could better understand the day to day challenges they face. Some of these events included working with a nurse at an area hospital, an assembly line worker at a manufacturing plant, a ride along with a delivery truck driver, weatherization installation at a home, installation of a geothermal heat/cooling system at a new senior housing development, and installation of solar energy panels on the roof of an elementary school.

The Congressional offices in Carmel, Goshen, and Washington responded to thousands of constituent opinions and information requests. Hundreds of casework problems were resolved for individuals and families who had problems with federal agencies when applying for Veterans benefits, Social Security and Medicare payments, and expediting passport applications.

The Congressional office provided hundreds of Capitol tours for school classes and families visiting Washington DC, fulfilled flag requests, nominated students to our nation's military service academies, and assisted with federal grant applications.

I cosponsored and voted for important legislation to create and save jobs, cut taxes on middle class families, improve the process for Veterans applying for well deserved benefits, reform financial services regulation, and health insurance reform designed to improve accessibility and affordability. I authored legislation that dramatically improved the Veterans benefits system, streamlining the process for veterans to receive the care and compensation they earned in service to our nation. My legislation is widely regarded as the most sweeping reform of the VA in a generation.

I was proud to bring millions of federal dollars home for local projects that create and save jobs, improve water quality, improve traffic safety and public transportation, build local infrastructure, and save local property tax dollars.

I voted against my own pay raise each time it came before the House, and donated my raise to local non-profit organizations rather than accepting it.

MEETING LOCAL COMMUNITY NEEDS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LOCAL JOBS AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

I worked actively to bring new jobs to the area and save local jobs that were at risk of leaving including:

Kolmar—Successfully assisted in keeping the largest manufacturing company in Western Orange County from leaving the state, thereby retaining hundreds of local jobs in an economically depressed area.

Pepsi Bottling—Successfully assisted with efforts to keep the company's facilities in Northern Westchester when they were considering a move out of state.

SpectraWatt—Instrumental in negotiations to bring a new solar energy manufacturing company to Dutchess County, replacing almost a hundred jobs that had been outsourced overseas. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis visited the site to discuss the local benefits with business and labor leaders. Although recent reports indicate the company is struggling, discussions are still ongoing to keep the jobs in Dutchess County.

I successfully advocated for Stewart Air National Guard Base to receive 8 new C-17 aircraft and all of the support services and local economic development opportunities that go with it. The Air Force made this award after a very competitive national process. I also brought US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to Stewart Airport for a meeting with local business and community leaders to discuss how the airport could be more of an economic engine for the region.

I hosted several small business seminars to inform local businesses about the opportunities created by the federal economic stimulus legislation, including direct tax reductions and capital availability. These events were attended by hundreds of people. In addition, numerous roundtables were held with local business leaders to provide me with direct input as to what they needed to create growth opportunities. These meetings served as the basis for small business tax cut legislation I introduced, several provisions were enacted into law.

Job Opportunity and Training Fairs were held to provide assistance in getting a job including interviewing skills, resume writing, networking, employer connections, adult and continuing education, green jobs, and entrepreneurship and one-on-one consultation. Many local employers attended and were able to talk directly with job seekers who were in attendance.

I brought House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller to the district for a public meeting to inform the community about the provisions of the new Direct Student Loan legislation and how they will make it easier for more students to attend college.

I held workshops for local constituents to provide them with information regarding how to prevent home foreclosure as well as mortgage refinancing options. I brought together local banks and housing counselors for presentations as well as direct individual counseling opportunities.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE:

I sponsored a series of energy independence forums throughout the district to provide practical information to municipalities, businesses, and individuals interested in developing domestic energy resources. These forums focused on wind, solar, hydro and tidal power, as well as biofuels and conservation. I also held an event which brought together solar manufacturers, retailers, and prospective buyers to create markets for local suppliers. Many local projects were developed as a result of the information provided and the introductions made between local providers and businesses.

I helped bring more than \$517m for weatherization funding and energy efficiency grants to New York. This money directly benefited local families who were able to save money on their energy bills by weatherizing their homes, and it created local jobs.

VETERANS

Many Veterans meetings were held throughout the district so I could gain input from local veterans regarding the challenges they face navigating the VA claims and benefits processes generally, as well as a specific challenges resulting from PTSD. Based on what I heard from local Veterans and VSOs, I successfully introduced legislation that significantly streamlined the benefits process, and advocated for a VA rules change regarding handling of PTSD claims. The rules change

makes it much easier for veterans suffering with PTSD to receive the care and compensation they deserve.

I sponsored a Veterans Employment and Education forum to help returning veterans transition from the battlefield to the classroom and the workplace and make sure they are aware of all the benefits they earned. A member of the Wounded Warrior Program works on my Congressional staff.

In addition I hosted a GI Bill forum to train Hudson Valley college admissions and administrative personnel regarding the benefits due to Veterans and how to assist them with the application process.

I strongly advocated for maintaining health care services for veterans at both campuses in Montrose and Castle Point. I also assisted in bringing a new veterans health clinic to Orange County.

I successfully sponsored legislation to name the Chester Post Office in memory of First Lt. Lou Allen, who was killed in Iraq and to name the Port Jervis Post office in memory of former Mayor and Senator Arthur Gray.

SENIORS

I hosted several events to help protect local Seniors from Medicare fraud. Experts were in attendance to provide specific information about scams in the area and how to avoid becoming a victim. In addition, I hosted informational events to prepare individuals and families who are nearing Medicare eligibility to prepare themselves to understand and navigate the many enrollment options and various plans available. Thousands of local Seniors participated in my Tele-Town Hall discussion about how the Health Care Reform law would affect them. Topics covered included closing the

donut hole, free preventative care and wellness visits for seniors, reducing subsidies to Medicare Advantage plans, fighting waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare, and long term care options.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING SESSIONS

I became aware of concerns regarding communication between some local law enforcement officials and federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers. As a result I requested ICE officials come to the district and provide information to local law enforcement regarding how ICE can assist local law enforcement and ways they could work together to improve public safety.

CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Each year my office hosted a Congressional Arts Competition for high school students in my district. The winner's artwork is shown for a year at the Capitol Building in Washington DC and runners up are shown in my local Congressional offices. The Congressional office worked with arts facilities and schools to encourage student artists, review the submissions, and have them shown within the community.

RESOURCE GUIDES

The Congressional office created the following resource guides to assist individuals, organizations, and small businesses with federal government services and opportunities:

Guide to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—Provided details of the federal economic stimulus legislation for individuals, businesses, organizations, and municipalities including information about available funding opportunities and how to apply for and access the funds.

Small Business Assistance Guide—A package of information and local resources for small businesses seeking assistance and information about loan opportunities and other federal and state support programs and developments.

Small Business Guide to the Affordable Care Act—Provided details on Small Business Tax Credits for employer coverage of health premiums and how other provisions of the new health care law affect small businesses.

Senior Handbook—Described resources available for seniors including health care and prescription drug coverage, long term care options, household utilities, VA, meal delivery and nutrition programs, senior centers, and transportation.

Veterans Services Website—Provides information about benefits and services, eligibility requirements, and contact information for local and national agencies and private organizations that provide assistance with healthcare, benefits, education, and employment.

Fire and Emergency Services Grant Resources—A package of information about federal, state and foundation grant opportunities for fire departments and ambulance corps and how to apply for such funds. In addition, the Congressional office hosted annual workshops to provide assistance to local fire departments as to how to write and submit federal grant applications to the Dept of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

Jobs Seekers' Handbook—Detailed information regarding resources available to people looking for a job and how to improve individual skills.

Foreclosure prevention tips and resource guide for homeowners.