

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE LATE JULIAN
WAGER

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay special tribute to Julian Wager, the legendary civic activist and community leader in the communities of western Queens, who passed away this month. Aptly honored as the "Honorary Mayor of Long Island City" for his extraordinary character and dedication to the neighborhoods of the city he loved, Julie Wager was a uniquely beloved figure who provided lifelong service to others.

Over the course of six decades, Mr. Wager sought tirelessly to expand and improve professional, financial and networking opportunities for businesses and residents in the Borough of Queens. He provided both entrepreneurial and philanthropic services to the people of his beloved community of Astoria. His family's business, Genius Shop, has been an integral part of the fabric of the vibrant Astoria community for more than half a century. Among his many notable contributions to the resilient Astoria neighborhood, Julie Wager helped ensure the commercial vibrance of Steinway Street for future generations.

Mr. Wager was once memorably quoted as saying, "We work together within the communities, and we appreciate the values of the residents and the merchants. These are the people that support the myriad of charities that exist out there, not the trendy franchised stores who just take the bucks and get out." True to those precepts, Julie Wager was one of the foremost reasons why the business and commercial communities of western Queens remain a thriving hub of commercial activity while also serving as livable communities for tens of thousands of New Yorkers.

Among his extensive contributions to the civic and commercial life of western Queens, Julie Wager served as president of the Steinway Street Merchants Association for more than a quarter century. In 1979, he founded the Central Astoria Local Development Coalition and has served as its president for more than two decades. In 1991, he established the Steinway Street Business Improvement District, serving as its president and executive vice president.

Having suffered a serious spinal injury in 2000 that left him a paraplegic, Julie Wager remained undaunted in his valiant perseverance and undeterred from his determination to volunteer his energies on behalf of others. He served as vice president of the Walter Kaner Foundation; former chairperson of A Way Out; and as a member of Queens Community Board 1 for more than three decades. He was also an enterprising and dedicated advertising director for the Queens Gazette, an institutional pillar of the communities he knew and loved so well. He leaves six daughters and nine grandchildren. Like them, the residents

and communities of western Queens know that we shall not see the likes of Julie Wager again, and we are all the poorer for it.

Madam Speaker, I salute the life and work of Mr. Julian Wager and I ask that my distinguished colleagues in this House join me in recognizing his extraordinary service and contributions to the civic and business life of our nation's greatest city.

CBC HOUR

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in solemn sympathy with the residents of Haiti as they are once again forced to cope with a major catastrophe. As you know, on Tuesday, January 12th, a massive, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince. There is still no official estimate of death or destruction, the damage to buildings is extensive and the number of injured or dead is estimated to be in the hundreds, even thousands.

Several eyewitnesses reported heavy damage and bodies in the streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, where concrete-block homes line steep hillsides.

Haiti sits on a large fault that has caused catastrophic quakes in the past, but this one was described as among the most powerful to hit the region within the last 200 years. With many poor residents living in tin-roof shacks that sit precariously on steep ravines arid with much of the construction in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in the country of questionable quality, the expectation was that the quake caused major damage to buildings and significant loss of life.

The dimensions of the disaster are still unfolding, Haiti's Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told CNN that he believes there are well over 100,000 dead, and leading senator Youri Latortue estimated the number at possibly as high as 500,000, according to the Associated Press.

Although this tragedy struck the land of our neighbor, it is also an American tragedy. The earthquake injured eight American employees working at the Embassy, including three who were medivaced. There are 3 U.S. citizens deaths currently reported but this number is expected to rise. Additionally, countless Americans have relatives in Haiti, and many of them are still unable to locate their loved ones.

America is responding, and will continue to respond with immediate humanitarian assistance to help the people of this struggling island nation rebuild their livelihoods. In the days ahead, I look forward to working with President Clinton, the Special Envoy to Haiti, to address the destruction caused by this natural disaster. I send my condolences to the people and government of Haiti as they grieve

once again in the aftermath of a natural disaster. As Haiti's neighbor, it is the United States' responsibility to help Haiti recover, and build the capacity to mitigate against future disasters.

America and her allies have already initiated a comprehensive, interagency response to the earthquake. The State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, USAID—all worked overnight to ensure that critical resources are positioned to support the response and recovery effort, including efforts to find and assist American citizens in Haiti.

U.S. Southern Command will deploy a team of 30 people to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts in the aftermath of yesterday's devastating earthquake. The team includes U.S. military engineers, operational planners, and a command and control group and communication specialists, will arrive in Haiti today on two C-130 Hercules aircraft. The team will work with U.S. Embassy personnel as well as Haitian, United Nations and international officials to assess the situation and facilitate followup on U.S. military support.

Our friends in the international community must also be commended for their efforts. The United Nations is releasing \$10 million from its emergency funds. The European Commission has approved €3 million (\$4.37 million) with more funds likely. Countless other nations from Germany, to China, to Israel to Mexico have also pledged support. I commend each of these nations for coming to a nation in dire need of assistance. Many of my constituents ask what they can do to help, or how they can find their loved ones. Those who are interested in helping immediately may text HAITI to 90999 and a donation of \$10 will be made automatically to the Red Cross for relief efforts. The donation will be charged to your cell phone bill.

The State Department also suggested contacting agencies such as the Red Cross or Mercy Corps to help with relief efforts.

For loved ones, The U.S. State Department Operations Center set up the following number for Americans seeking information about relatives in Haiti: (888) 407-4747. The department cautioned that because of heavy volume, some callers may hear a recording.

This weekend I will return to Houston, where I will meet with my Haitian-American constituents. It is important to mention that the Department of Homeland Security has already put a hold on the scheduled deportation of Haitians in America. I cannot imagine that any Member of Congress will rise to challenge this assistance to Haitian families in their time of need.

Once again, I am devastated by the immeasurable tragedy that occurred in Haiti. Along with my colleagues, I hope to visit Haiti in the near future to meet with their leaders and see what the United States can do to rebuild the shattered livelihoods.

• 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.

IN RECOGNITION OF JIM
KEATHLEY

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, it has come to my attention that Jim Keathley, the superintendent of the Missouri Highway Patrol, will be retiring on March 1, 2010. After exactly 33 years of service with the highway patrol, Mr. Keathley's impressive career will come to a close.

The people of Missouri have benefited greatly from the 3 years he has served as superintendent, a job he enjoys immensely. Among his most notable achievements is a reduction in traffic deaths to levels not seen since 1950. This impressive accomplishment is due in no small part to his vigilant focus on highway safety.

For more than three decades, Mr. Keathley has put his life on the line for the safety of my fellow Missourians. Now, his sons follow this proud tradition as state troopers themselves. Missouri is a better place due to the proud service of Mr. Keathley and his sons.

Madam Speaker, it is with great honor that I wish the very best for Mr. Keathley as he begins a new chapter in his life. I trust that my fellow members of the House will join me in thanking him for his service to the people of Missouri.

HONORING GARY SEVERSON

HON. JOHN T. SALAZAR

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and legacy of Gary Severson, who for the past 11 years has admirably served as Executive Director of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG).

Mr. Severson has led the council with an openness and team spirit that has allowed for effective management, while developing partnerships among the city and county entities he served. Under his leadership, the NWCCOG has emerged as a viable cohort and has grown as a respected and valued resource in addressing regional issues. As a result, the Council's guidance has been sought by elected officials from Colorado to Washington, DC.

Under Mr. Severson, the NWCCOG has taken responsibility for many complex federal and state projects with significant impact on programs including Weatherization, All-Hazards Emergency Management and Elevator Inspection Programs. The influence of his leadership has been particularly profound in protection of federal lands within the confines of the NWCCOG region.

With more than 68 percent of the NWCCOG region being managed by federal agencies, his stewardship and insight have helped grow the Council into a recognized leader in National Forest Planning, Community Wildfire Protection Planning and mitigating the detrimental effects of bark beetle infestation. Such efforts have led to many accolades, including receipt of the prestigious USDA Rural Leadership Award.

The future is bright for the region as the NWCCOG explores ways to expand on an economic base of recreation and construction. Mr. Severson's vision includes the possibilities of a sustainable wood products industry, enhancing higher education and upgrading medical services. He has truly left a lasting legacy of accomplishment.

Madam Speaker, I proudly acknowledge the work and leadership of Gary Severson and extend to him the gratitude of the 28 member jurisdictions of NWCCOG for his 11 years as Executive Director. I wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

**HONORING THE DEATH OF LAHORI
RAM**

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. GARAMENDI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the one year passing of Lahori Ram. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the outstanding achievements of Lahori during his lifetime.

Lahori Ram served with a strong vision and dedication to the local community and California. From the day he emigrated from India to this great nation in 1972, Lahori embraced the notion that in America, hard work and sacrifice has limitless possibilities. He lived his American Dream, and his lasting legacy of philanthropy, community leadership, and political activism will be with us for generations to come.

As a 28-year-old graduate student, Lahori Ram worked in farm fields in Fresno for 75 cents an hour to help pay for a master's degree in Foreign Affairs from Yuba College. In 1976, he started a career with the United States Postal Service, where he worked an average of 55 to 60 hours per week, including most holidays, before retiring 18 years later in 1994.

Lahori Ram's hard work allowed him to buy his first family home in San Bruno in 1979, and with uncanny investment ability he sold that home in 1984, and eventually came to own over 100 apartment units in the bay area. With his success, after retirement, Lahori dedicated himself to philanthropy and to giving back to his community.

In 1981 Lahori Ram helped establish the Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Temple in Pittsburg, generously donated to charity, assisted many causes in India, and was a well-known figure in the Sikh and Hindu religious communities. He was appointed and served on the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Committee; the California Transportation Commission; and the California Commission for Economic Development.

Madam Speaker, I am truly honored in joining many Californians to pay tribute to my friend and dedicated public servant, Lahori Ram.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, I was not present. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 2, "yea" on rollcall No. 3, "yea" on rollcall No. 4, and "yea" on rollcall No. 5.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, I was not present for votes 4 and 5.

Had I been present for rollcall 4, supporting the initiatives of Chicago Wilderness and the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, I would have voted "yea."

Had I been present for rollcall 5, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 101 West Highway 64 Bypass in Roper, North Carolina, as the E.V. Wilkins Post Office, I would have voted "yea."

TRIBUTE TO ERIC BOTKIN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Eric Botkin, a retired firefighter paramedic and valued member of the community of Riverside, California. Riverside has been blessed by dynamic and dedicated leaders, like Eric, who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work.

Eric Botkin began his career with the City of Riverside Fire Department on May 1, 1998. He held the position of firefighter paramedic until his retirement. During his career he performed as a fire investigator from February 18, 2000 through July 5, 2002. He completed Engine Certification on November 2, 2007. His last assignment was Fire Station 13 on Canyon Springs Blvd.

Prior to working for the City of Riverside Fire Department Eric was a paid/call firefighter with the Orange County Fire Authority. He also worked for Lifefleet Ambulance and Medtrans Ambulance before pursuing his fire department career.

Eric passed away at his Temecula home on December 27th surrounded by family and friends, including his wife, Hallie, and son, Hunter, 10, after battling glioblastoma multiforme, a form of brain cancer. Eric Botkin was diagnosed in October of 2007 and retired from the fire department on October 30, 2008. For the past two years Eric remained upbeat and was an inspiration to all.

On behalf of all those who knew him, it is my honor to offer these remarks as a tribute to the life and legacy of Riverside Firefighter