

November—I think it was the third Thursday in November as I recall—and it has stayed there to this time.

□ 2150

So we have the story now of the Pilgrims. As you celebrate your Thanksgiving this year, it might be helpful to think back and say there is more than Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims. They were a group of people who were willing to change the system, to think of different ideas. They came here and separated civil and church governments. They came here and created the model of a written constitution, the idea that the government is to be the servant of the people, that people have God-given rights and that it is the job of government to protect those rights, as we stated another 150 years later in our Declaration of Independence. They came here with the idea that, after trying socialism, it wasn't going to work. They realized that it was not biblical, that it was a form of theft, so they kicked socialism out. They learned that in the early 1620s.

So we can thank these people because of the fact that they were innovative and had that spirit and desire. Even when half of them died and the Mayflower was going back, they clung to their vision. They had the courage to create a new civilization. In the words of Bradford Prince, as written in his diary, they felt that perhaps they'd lit a candle on a dark shore. They felt that perhaps they could be stepping-stones for people who would come after them to found a great Nation. So the dream that they had of coming here to do something new, unlike what Europe had done, was very much in their hearts. It was very much a part of their thinking as they scratched that existence on that lonely, rock-strewn Massachusetts shoreline. To this day, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, we can remember their first Thanksgiving when they put a few kernels of corn on a plate to remind them of how close to starving to death they had been at one time.

It's a beautiful story. There's a lot more to it, a lot more adventure to it. There were knife fights in cabins. I haven't had time to cover all of that with you, but the basics are there. This is a great bunch of Americans, a wonderful adventure story and a time for us to give consideration to the fact that we also have been given a challenge, a challenge of a beautiful land that was established on a firm foundation. It's our job to keep it that way and to pass it on to our children—a government that is the servant of the people and not the master.

God bless you all. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OUR POLITICAL HERITAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 6, 2009, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, I had the great privilege and honor to deliver my first speech as a Representative of the people of the 10th District of Illinois. As I end my time in the House of Representatives and begin with the honor of serving the great State of Illinois, I want to thank those that I have served with and reflect on my time in this great body.

Our Jefferson's Manual of House Rules traces its heritage back to the Palace of Westminster, in London, England. Early in the 1980s, I worked under a member of the House of Commons during the time of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and in Parliament, great weight is put on a member's maiden speech.

In the speech that I gave in the House of Representatives, a new Member outlines the principles for which he stands, and as I began my service to the people of northern Illinois, I highlighted the political tradition of the men and women who represented us in this House. A look at their accomplishments and service mirrors who we are and the gifts that we can provide to this great Nation.

Our community has a 180-year-long tradition of electing leaders who are very independent and ahead of their times. Ours is a rich tradition, and I can only hope that history will find my contributions to be consistent with the predecessors', whose roots trace back to 1818 when a new State of Illinois stood on the frontier of a growing Nation.

My predecessors were committed to the people of Illinois and to the good of this Union. At the same time, they understood the important role of the United States and of the world as a beacon of freedom, and while they fought for similarities here at home, they also fought for human rights abroad and condemned those who would spread intolerance and hate wherever it occurred.

Within its current boundaries, our congressional district encompasses a diverse community, including northern Cook and eastern Lake Counties, and it stretches from Wilmette, north along Lake Michigan's shore, to Waukegan. To tour our district is to see firsthand both the promise of the American Dream and those who have not yet realized it.

Our residents enjoy both great benefits and serious challenges. We are home to some of the wealthiest communities in the Nation, and yet we also have some of the most economically challenged communities in Illinois. We have pristine wetlands and forests, as well as one of the worst polluted harbors in the Great Lakes, and we have more than 1,000 tons of highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel stored just 120 yards from Lake Michigan. We are also home to the only training center for new recruits in the United States

Navy. Each day, thousands of my constituents commute to Chicago, fighting some of the worst traffic congestion in the Nation each morning into the city and repeating the process every evening.

In serving the people of the 10th District, I have been honored to follow a long list of role models who have represented us in the Congress:

Our first Representative, John McLean, was one of the State's pioneer political leaders. He took his seat in the Old House Chamber on December 3, 1818, serving just 1 year. He was later elected to the United States Senate to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Senator Ninian Edwards in 1824 and served through March of the following year. While our pathfinder's service was very brief in both Chambers of this Congress, he was honored by the State, which named McLean County after him.

It was about this time that the first European family settled on the North Shore in what is now Evanston, residing in a place that was described as "a rude habitation of posts, poles and blankets." More notable, though, was the construction of the first permanent structure on the North Shore, a roadside grocery, serving cold beer and liquor to travelers. This grocery was described as "the headquarters of counterfeiters, fugitives from justice and, generally speaking, a vile resort." Ironically, 100 years later, Evanston would become the international headquarters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and it is from these Spartan but colorful beginnings that we trace our suburban history.

Numerous shifts in population have brought many changes to the boundary lines of today's 10th Congressional District, and redistricting has changed its landscape no fewer than 10 times in the last 190 years. We face another change soon as Illinois prepares to lose a congressional seat before the next election. By 1902, Lake and northern Cook Counties were part of the 10th District, and the first outlines of the current district were formed as a new phenomenon in American living emerged, the suburbs.

In 1913, the election of a Progressive candidate, Charles M. Thompson, was indicative of the new independent spirit of the 10th District voters and of our willingness to elect whomever will best represent our interests, regardless of incumbency or party affiliation. Independent, thoughtful leadership are common themes among the men and women who represented our 10th District. Our leaders include:

John Stuart, a law partner of President Lincoln's; James Woodworth; Isaac Arnold; Charles Farwell; Lorenzo Brentano; George Foss; Abner Mikva; George Adams, a Civil War veteran who fought in the First Regiment of the Illinois Volunteer Artillery; and Robert McClory, who served for nearly 20 years and was a House manager for the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972.

Yet there are five men and women who represented the 10th District who stand out among this impressive crowd and deserve star treatment. These five heroes fought against slavery, advocated equal pay for women, civil rights initiatives, and served a number of Presidents as they battled human rights abuses abroad while funding biomedical research here at home.

□ 2200

These five exemplify the high standard of leadership demanded by our constituents and expected by our Nation.

Elected in the 33rd Congress as a Whig, Representative Elihu B. Washburne served his final seven terms as a Republican. During his tenure in Congress, he served as chairman of the Committee on Commerce and, in the 40th Congress, as chairman of the Committee on Appropriations. In 1862, President Lincoln personally lobbied to have him elected Speaker, although he eventually fell short.

Representative Washburne's legacy is legendary. He was a strong opponent of slavery and became known as one of the leaders of the Radical Republicans, along with Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner. This group was outspoken in its opposition to slavery that went well beyond calling for simple abolition. They called for complete equality under the law for freed slaves.

The Radical Republicans were critical of the reconstruction policies of both President Lincoln and President Andrew Johnson. Representative Washburne argued that Southern plantations should be subdivided and redistributed among former slaves, and when President Johnson attempted to veto the extension of the Freedman's Bureau, the Civil Rights Act, and the Reconstruction Act, Representative Washburne and his colleagues took action and were successful in their efforts to pass the Reconstruction Act.

The Radical Republicans and Washburne became leaders in the impeachment of President Johnson, and when his close friend Ulysses S. Grant became President, Representative Washburne was appointed as our country's Secretary of State. He resigned just 11 days later, ending what remains the shortest term for any U.S. Secretary of State.

Congressman Washburne left that high office because the President offered him the opportunity to assume the leadership of the American diplomatic mission in Paris. Congressman Washburne served as our ambassador to France through the Franco-Prussian War and there demonstrated true independence and initiative.

Ambassador Washburne offered refuge to diplomats from various German States and other foreigners who were abandoned by their diplomatic missions. In grave danger on the street, those diplomats found safety under the American flag with Ambassador Washburne, and when the German Army surrounded Paris in late 1870,

Washburne remained at his post and was the only foreign diplomat still in residence in Paris during the days of the Commune. These were tough times for besieged Parisians, who were reduced to eating rats.

Washburne honored our Revolutionary War debts to France by continuing his humanitarian service. His international service and his commitment to humanitarian relief presaged our own time when America has become a foundation for freedom and the international system of humanitarian relief missions around the world. Congressman Washburne remained in Paris until 1877, when he returned to Chicago.

Sixty years later, we come to the beginning of a career of another star in our story, Congressman Ralph Church, who won election to Congress in the 74th, 75th and 76th Congresses and again in the 78th Congress through his death in the 80th Congress. Many people living in our community still remember Congressman Church and his wife, Marguerite.

The second luminary in our story is a Representative far ahead of her time, Representative Church's widow, Marguerite Church. Mrs. Church succeeded her late husband in the Congress, and during her first term, Illinois redistricted its congressional seats for the first time since 1901. It placed northern Cook and Lake Counties in what was then called the 13th District.

Mrs. Church brought a commonsense approach to Federal spending. She spoke against what she called extravagant and reckless spending, earning respect from both her colleagues and her constituents. Her seat on the Government Operations Committee gave her an ideal platform to urge restraint in spending, and her assignment on the Committee on Foreign Affairs allowed her to encourage the growth of democracy across the globe.

Many of Mrs. Church's policies proposals were forward-thinking. Early in her career, she advocated equal pay for women and civil rights initiatives. The progress of the early 1960s finds its roots 10 years prior, partially in the service of Marguerite Church. She was the only female Member of the Illinois delegation, and her voting record was impeccable, answering more than 11,000 rollcalls during her tenure in the House, missing only four.

In 1959 as a ranking member of the Foreign Economic Policy Subcommittee, she traveled more than 40,000 miles and visited 17 countries. In 1960, at the invitation of President Eisenhower, she participated in the White House Conference on Children and Youth and, in 1961, served as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations 15th Assembly.

While participating, she jumped far ahead of her time, especially in her outspoken public criticism of South Africa and their policy of apartheid. Mrs. Church then retired in 1962.

The 88th Congress saw the beginning of another legendary career. Donald

Rumsfeld was elected Representative for this district, having previously served on the staff of Congressman David Dennison and Robert Griffin. While in the House, Rumsfeld sat on the Committee on Science and Astronautics and Government Operations. It was during this heyday of President Kennedy's space program, which heralded Lake Forest's own Jim Lovell, who went on to command Apollo 13.

Rumsfeld also had a seat on the Joint Economic Committee in both the 90th and 91st Congresses. His campaigns were indicative of what politics used to be and what they were to become. He accepted only small donations and limited expenditures for his campaign while relying on an army of volunteers to canvass neighborhoods and perform day-to-day tasks which served as the lifeblood, then and today, for any strong congressional campaign.

In 1969, he resigned to accept a place in President Nixon's administration as the head of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Not knowing much about the Office's mission at the time, he turned to his chief of staff, Bruce Ladd, who had an intern friend who had written a college paper on the Office of Economic Opportunity. That intern came to brief Congressman Rumsfeld on the Office's opportunities and walked out with a job. The intern's name was Richard Cheney.

In 1971, President Nixon appointed Rumsfeld as the director of the Cost of Living Council, a position he held until 1973 when he became the United States ambassador to NATO for 2 years.

When President Ford took office in 1974, he recalled Rumsfeld to Washington to coordinate a four-man transition team. His performance earned him appointment as the White House chief of staff, although he personally did not like the title and preferred to be called staff coordinator. He brought Secretary Cheney with him.

In 1975, Rumsfeld was appointed our Secretary of Defense, a position which he held through the end of the Ford administration in 1977. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom that same year, and during the Reagan administration, Rumsfeld's expertise led him to accept membership on the President's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control, and he became an adviser on government and national security affairs in 1983 and 1984. He was named Special Presidential Envoy to the Middle East in 1984.

Rumsfeld's experience in the private sector as CEO of G.D. Searle & Company and as a senior adviser to William Blair & Company complemented his government service. I'm proud to call him a friend.

Building on the records of Washburne, Church, and Rumsfeld, among others, we touch on other stars of our story. Congressman Robert McClory represented Lake County and serves as a true symbol of independence in service to the Nation. Congressman McClory was a conservative and a

loyal Republican who was a defender of President Nixon until the evidence convinced him otherwise. It was Congressman McClory's votes for two impeachment articles that set the standard for political independence, judgment, and the rule of law in this House.

For us, we now come to the final predecessor of mine in this seat, Congressman John Edward Porter, who won a special election in 1980 to follow Abner Mikva. To briefly touch on Congressman Mikva's service, it was brilliant in many ways and set another standard for independence in this Chamber and on the Federal bench.

□ 2210

Following him, Congressman Porter gained a seat on the Committee on Appropriations in 1980 where he served until his retirement after the 106th Congress.

Following a trip to the Soviet Union in 1983, Congressman Porter founded the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. He witnessed numerous human rights abuses while in the Soviet Union and decided to enlist the support of his colleagues to bring pressure on nations and groups that mistreat the innocent or prisoners of conscience. In his role as cochairman of the Human Rights Caucus, he helped free refuseniks, fought for the rights of North Korean refugees and religious freedom in China, spoke out against the use of child soldiers in Africa, and condemned the brutal regime of Sani Abacha in Nigeria.

The Congressional Human Rights Caucus was the first U.S. Government entity to host the Dalai Lama in Washington. Congressman Porter also sponsored legislation authorizing the creation of Radio Free Asia and then secured appropriations to fund this ground-breaking program, helping move the agenda of freedom in China.

Porter's record of accomplishments in foreign policy is impressive, but his record of constituent service was unmatched. He led efforts to improve the safety of Waukegan Regional Airport by updating the radio and control tower. He brought back the Coast Guard rescue unit to help the people of southern Lake Michigan, the same Coast Guard folks that saved my life as a teenager.

He worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to control flooding along the north branch of the Chicago River, and his commitment to the environment led him to be a strong supporter of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. He orchestrated the effort to designate 290 acres of land at Fort Sheridan as open space and was one of only six House Members named as taxpayer superhero by the Grace Commission's Citizens Against Government Waste in 1992. He was named to the Concord Coalition's honor role in '97 and '98 for his commitment to eliminating deficits and balancing the budget.

John Porter was always willing to take chances when he truly believed in

an issue. And 15 years ago, long before it was safe to do so, he proposed reforms to the third rail of American politics, Social Security. His proposal, in fact, can be considered revolutionary because it was one of the first and was remarkably similar to many proposals that followed.

What Congressman Porter may be most remembered for was his improvement of the health care for all Americans. In his role as chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education on the Committee on Appropriations, Congressman Porter launched the effort to double funding for the National Institutes of Health within 5 years. This additional funding helped researchers develop better and new treatments and helped fund the cracking of the human genome. He also had a commitment to biomedical research and investment in the future that will undoubtedly result in better health care for all people around the world.

John Porter served us all in the highest tradition of public service and commitment to a greater good. Having served as his administrative assistant, I could not have had a stronger role model in public service. I had some very large shoes to fill and can only hope to be remembered by my constituents as someone who fulfilled his tradition.

The record clearly demonstrates northeastern Illinois' political character, strongly independent, generally ahead of our time. Ideas like emancipation, equal pay for women, and an end to apartheid were all part of our representatives' leadership in decades ahead of the body politic. Our opinions do not necessarily adhere to strict party lines; and, therefore, anyone who represents our area must demonstrate independence and break from the party on occasion to make sure that they are adhering to our values. My predecessors did this. And while I'm a firm believer in my party's vision, it's that tradition of independence that I sought to serve in the House of Representatives.

Elihu Washburne, Marguerite Stitt Church, Don Rumsfeld, Robert McClory, John Porter. They are not household names, but their service helped shape the history of our Nation because of their commitment to do what was right and the decision to take action to protect those most in need. It is an example of what I strove to live up to in the service of this House and the people of the 10th Congressional District.

Drawing on this tradition, I focused my service on independence modeled by Congressman McClory, on spending restraint modeled after Mrs. Church, on constituent service and biomedical research in the example of John Porter, on national defense modeled after Don Rumsfeld, and America's role in the world modeled after Elihu B. Washburne. In light of this history, the people of the 10th District demand

their Representative in Congress should be a thoughtful, independent leader at all times. And I believe such independence is a way to represent the people of Illinois, and I take that very seriously.

Early in my service, I had the opportunity to prove that I would follow that tradition for the 10th District. I cosponsored and voted in favor of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform law, a bill opposed by most Members of my party. Although my support did not make me popular in leadership circles, I made a promise to my constituents, and I was not going to break it. This was not the time to follow party loyalty because I thought the Nation's interests were in supporting that legislation.

I have consistently cosponsored and supported bipartisan legislation to end hate crimes and employment discrimination, bolster access to women's health services, and ensure equal rights for all Americans. I've also been a staunch supporter of Federal stem cell research. This cutting-edge research has the potential to eliminate pain and suffering for millions of people who are living with cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and more. Such independence is reflected in Congressional Quarterly's analysis, which identified my record, for example, as "the center of the House" in 2009.

My predecessor, John Porter, set our country on a course to double funding for the National Institutes of Health over his first 5 years; and I maintained that commitment to his legacy through 10 years in this House. On my view, it is essential that we continue this promise and ensure that we remain committed to the future advancement of medical technology and research.

I'm also very proud to be one of the only few Republicans who worked actively to craft stem cell legislation and was an original sponsor of H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which the House passed but unfortunately was vetoed by the President. The future of stem cell research is unknown, but I'm hopeful that we will continue to lead on this issue and ensure that we find a permanent solution and set funding from the Federal Government.

Following the inauguration of President Obama, I worked with my fellow moderates in the Tuesday Group, the House Centrist Caucus, to create a health care reform agenda. As a result of hundreds of meetings and roundtable discussions with providers and doctors and patient groups, we authored the Medical Rights and Reform Act, which guarantees the doctor-patient relationship, allows individuals to buy insurance across State lines, and would end frivolous lawsuits.

Following Congresswoman Church's footsteps, I also took measures to reduce wasteful Federal spending. I bucked my party in leading the charge to deny hundreds of millions of dollars

in Federal funding for the infamous Bridge to Nowhere in Alaska. I was also the first member of the Appropriations Committee to swear off pork-barrel spending in our broken earmark system. I consistently voted to support the taxpayer and ease the burden of Federal taxes on American families.

I voted in a way that reflects a pragmatic problem-solving nature for the people of northeastern Illinois. I tried to make sure that the Federal Government was making daily life easier for suburban families. The most common complaint among families in Chicago suburbs is traffic congestion. Our highway system is outdated and in need of repair, and mass transit can be more readily available if we work policy correctly. To address this, I joined with my colleague to the west, Congresswoman MELISSA BEAN, to create the Suburban Transportation Commission. Our goal was to bring together local leaders with their State and Federal representatives to find solutions to local and regional transportation problems.

I have been a staunch supporter of commuter rail; and I am pleased to say that since we've been in office, Metra has expanded service on its North Central line and is working now to build the Star line, which I hope will provide a commuter rail link between western suburbs. I also introduced the COMMUTER Act to incentivize the use of public transportation among suburbanites who would otherwise be stuck in traffic.

Recognizing the growth of suburban communities, I joined with dozens of my colleagues to devise the Suburban Agenda, a package of legislation designed to address the needs and concerns of suburban families. We focused on keeping kids safe in school, making college more affordable, preserving open space, and improving our health care delivery system. And to keep employment up in the suburbs in the teeth of the Great Recession, I introduced the Small Business Bill of Rights, a bill to protect the number one engine of our economy, small businesses.

□ 2220

From preserving the right to a secret ballot in a union election to eliminating unnecessary paperwork, the Small Business Bill of Rights is a prime example of suburban pragmatism at work.

Suburban families also expect world-class schools, and in the 10th District we are privileged to have some of the best public schools in the country. I think it is fitting that the first bill I introduced in the House was the GRADE-A Act to ensure full funding for Federal impact aid schools. I established an education advisory board to help guide me in formulating education policy, and this board helped draft legislation making technical corrections to the No Child Left Behind Act that I believed would enhance local control of schools and empower teachers.

I worked on many facets of improving our education system, including creating healthier learning environments. I introduced the Green Schools Act to provide matching grants for green school construction projects in our classrooms and the School Conservation Corps Act to support conservation clubs and teach kids about the importance of environmental protection.

As a staunch supporter of alternative energy and transportation, we supported and authored many other bills to provide permanent tax incentives for renewable energy and clean transportation. I also joined with Congressmen Boehlert and PLATTS to help lead the Republican effort to raise the Nation's fuel economy standards.

Following in the tradition of Congressmen Washburne and Porter, we promoted human rights in remote corners of the world through my tenure of this House. I took up the case of a journalist imprisoned in Bangladesh simply on the, quote, crime of promoting interfaith dialogue between Bangladesh and Israel.

Shoaib Choudhury was charged with sedition, a crime punishable by death under Bangladeshi law, and spent 18 months in prison before congressional attention convinced authorities to release him. In 2007, the House passed a resolution I authored calling on the Government of Bangladesh to immediately drop all charges against Shoaib. It carried by a vote of 409-1.

Some of our work also helped secure the release of Dr. Taye Wolde-Semayat, a political prisoner in Ethiopia. We condemned the persecution of Baha'is in Iran and sought to bring peace to Darfur, worked to secure the release of the first Egyptian blogger to be jailed for his online writings, and established the Congressional Commission on Divided Families to reunite Korean Americans with their North Korean relatives.

We fought to protect Iraq's Christian community from increasing violence and led efforts to combat the rise of global anti-Semitism. We fought for women's rights around the world, basic education, health services, and access to family planning.

We stood up for our allies—Poland, Armenia, Greece, Ukraine, and Georgia—and increased oversight of the United Nation's Relief and Works Agency, and demanded accountability in U.S. assistance to the West Bank and Gaza.

We successfully changed policy on proposed arms sales to Saudi Arabia, protecting U.S. forces in the region, and preserving Israel's qualitative military advantage.

We delivered Eyes in the Sky, and the X-Band radar system to defend the State of Israel, and our bipartisan legislation moved forward to prohibit gasoline sales to Iran which is now the law of the land.

In my time representing the people of the 10th District, there is one defining

moment that shaped my work in the Congress and forever changed our country. I started the day on September 11, 2001, in the Pentagon having breakfast with Secretary Rumsfeld. The meeting broke up early when the Secretary was notified that a second plane hit the World Trade Center. Shortly thereafter, we were evacuated from the Capitol complex after the Pentagon was hit. Being forced from our offices that day was a profoundly sad moment.

As a veteran and a Naval Reserve intelligence officer, I knew we were at war and there was much work to be done in the Congress to protect the American people and provide our military with the resources they needed to fight terrorism.

The House began debating legislation to establish a Department of Homeland Security while most congressional offices were closed as a result of an anthrax attack. Working out of temporary space at the General Accounting Office, I authored language providing for effective 911 emergency call capabilities from telephones on passenger aircraft and trains. At the same time, I also began working on improving the effectiveness of the State Department's Rewards for Justice program to help provide investigators with more information that could lead to the capture of wanted terrorists. Remembering how a tip from this program led to the capture of Mir Aimal Kasi, the terrorist who murdered CIA employees outside headquarters on January 25, 1993, I wanted to increase the maximum reward for information that would lead us to terrorists responsible for 9/11.

In the years that followed, we continued to work to make this program more effective, authorizing special payments, expanding the number of informants eligible for rewards, and allowing payments other than cash to be made in certain circumstances.

The war in Afghanistan requires contributions from all elements of the U.S. Government, and sometimes the best support comes from unexpected places. On one trip to Afghanistan, I was pleasantly surprised to find that some of the best intelligence against al Qaeda and the Taliban were coming from agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration. I was also surprised to learn that the DEA was not officially part of the U.S. intelligence community. I returned to Washington and worked with Congressman FRANK WOLF to make sure that the DEA became an official member of the intelligence community again.

I also worked to provide DEA with specialized intelligence aircraft to use in Afghanistan. The intelligence collected from this plane not only helps warfighters on the ground, but the information is also admissible in court, meaning narcoterrorists in Afghanistan could more likely face criminal charges in the United States.

I am very proud of my work in Congress to help our men and women in

uniform fight overseas, and more proud to have served alongside them. In December 2008, I became the first Member of the House to serve in an imminent danger area when I deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan to serve as a special adviser to General Nicholson for Regional Command South focused on counternarcotics. A year later, I returned to Afghanistan to serve again. Each time, I have become more committed to the men and women serving over there and their mission.

Today, 9 years after the first American boots hit the ground in Afghanistan, the mission remains vital to our security. We must leave Afghanistan only after victory is secured and terrorists no longer find sanctuary in its rugged mountains capable of hurting Americans and the United States.

As a veteran, one of my highest priorities in the Congress is to take care of our men and women in uniform, consistently work to improve the quality of life for active duty servicemen and -women, their families, and retirees.

I am proud to have joined with Congressman DENNIS MOORE to pass the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial Coin Act. This memorial will honor the sacrifices made by America's more than 3 million disabled veterans by building a memorial for them here in Washington, D.C., within eyesight of the Capitol. I was also inspired to see this bill passed by an extraordinary young man, Sergeant Bryan Anderson of Rolling Meadows, Illinois. Bryan lost both legs and an arm due to a roadside bomb in Iraq.

Washington has legions of professional advocates who make a living out of convincing people to see issues from their point of view, but none can compare to Bryan. With Bryan, what you see is what you get—a veteran with an inspirational story who wants to see the memorial built, not for himself, not just for disabled veterans, but so that everyone will remember the sacrifice of all of our veterans.

One project in particular follows the arc of my career in this House. In 1999, a Washington-based consultant wrote a study recommending the closure of the North Chicago VA Hospital. The study said that Lake County veterans could get help downtown in Chicago or Maywood, or even the Milwaukee area, with only a 30-minute drive.

□ 2230

The study overlooked the fact that North Chicago VA was recently renovated and housed modern in-patient wards with the latest equipment still in bubble wrap. It also overlooked the fact that the Navy was operating an outdated, oversized hospital no more than a mile away and had plans to invest more than \$100 million to replace it. I thought it made more sense to combine these two institutions, rather than close one and rebuild the other.

Over the last 10 years, we battled the bureaucracy and gradually integrated the services of the Navy and VA. We

started by combining in-patient mental health, leading to a jointly operated operations suite and emergency room, and on October 1st of this year, we officially opened the first truly joint Navy-VA hospital in the country. This new facility will care for more than 100,000 veterans, retirees, sailors, and their families. It is my hope that this model will improve veterans' health care throughout our Nation.

What better way to honor our veterans than by naming the facility after one of our Nation's heroes, 10th District resident and Apollo XIII Commander Captain James A. Lovell, Jr.

In 2007, I wrote to Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England and requested that the new facility have the name that reflected the mission of this pioneering hero. In response, the Deputy Secretary wrote, "It is fitting to name the facility after Captain Lovell, not only for the reasons cited in your letter, but also for his role in the history-making Gemini 7 mission, which included the first rendezvous of two manned maneuverable spacecraft. The joint DoD-VA health care facility in North Chicago can be described as the first rendezvous of two separate medical treatment facilities, joining them into one cohesive, comprehensive federal facility. It, too, is a history-making event."

As I leave this House, we face key challenges; challenges of solving increasing gridlock in our communities; challenges on the environmental front of cleaning up nuclear waste and PCBs; challenges of maintaining the tradition of the 10th District in education excellence; challenges like keeping the U.S. health care system on the cutting edge so that each American lives a full and healthy life; and providing tax fairness for married people, ending the death tax, and stopping government waste.

I look forward to continuing our work and confronting these challenges head-on in the Senate. In the meantime, I want to extend my best wishes and heartfelt congratulations to our congressman-elect, Robert Dold, who I know will continue our tradition of thoughtful, independent leadership. Congressman-elect Dold shares my passion for our district, our State, our country, and our democratic allies. I am confident that the 10th District is now in good hands and look forward to working with him to advancing these goals.

Mr. Speaker, I first arrived in this House as a staff member in 1984, 26 years ago. On and off, I served during the speakerships of Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright, Tom Foley, Newt Gingrich, Dennis Hastert, and NANCY PELOSI. This institution is the real arena of American politics. It is here that the raw emotions of the American people are translated nearly instantaneously into draft policies to address our Nation's needs. It is here where democracy is strongest, youngest, and most vibrant.

As an intern, staffer, and Member I have had the honor to serve in the

House of Commons in London, in the House of Representatives here in Washington, and soon in the Senate. But most of my professional life, in one form or another, has been here in the People's House. I have loved every minute of it, and would say to young Americans that one of the best ways to make a real difference in life is to join the roughly 12,000 Americans who have had the unique privilege of serving their district here in the center of the democratic world.

I want to especially thank my district chiefs of staff, Dodie McCracken, Lenore Macdonald, and Eric Elk; my Washington chiefs of staff, Doug O'Brien, Liesl Hickey, and Les Munson; and the man who drafted my first speech in the House, Patrick Magnuson, and the man who drafted my last speech in the House, Patrick Magnuson.

I move on now to the Senate to serve the people of Illinois. I am honored to have the privilege to work for everyone from Rockford to Cairo. But part of my heart will always remain here in the House with the spirits of Washburne, Church, Rumsfeld, Mikva, and Porter, the men and women who represented the northern suburbs here in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the floor for the last time, and thank you.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GRAYSON) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GRAYSON, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. BURTON of Indiana) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, for 5 minutes, today and November 18.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, November 18, 2010, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

10327. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the