

It is important to note that her excellent performance, distinguished service, and good cheer paved the way for more African Americans to secure appointments in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and other important House institutions earning her the respect and friendship of her colleagues and, of course, Members of Congress.

She has a wonderful family, including her son John Mayes, III, who works for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and David, who works for the Department of Homeland Security; and her daughter, Tira, who is a forensic specialist. You know she has done well at home and well here in the House of Representatives. Her children have learned from her. Her grandchildren will benefit from her. I am delighted to indicate that we have introduced a resolution, H. Res. 444, into the House RECORD to honor Nikki Mayes.

I am delighted to say that we honor you and appreciate you for 36 years of service and being a pioneering woman of service and an African American woman who led for others. Thank you so very much.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay to tribute to the remarkable accomplishments of Nicarsia Mayes, a Capitol Hill trailblazer and the first African-American woman to serve as a Doorkeeper of the House of Representatives.

Nicarsia Mayes began her career of service to the House of Representatives and the people of the United States on September 7, 1977, when she was hired on the recommendation of Congressman Augustus Hawkins of California as an elevator operator and entrusted to operate the last "Members Only" manual elevator.

In 1980, Nicarsia Mayes, or "Nikki," as she was affectionately known, was hired as a staff member of the then Office of the Doorkeeper, the first African-American woman ever hired by that office.

In 1994, Nikki joined the staff of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, serving as a member of the Chamber Security Division until her retirement in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, Nikki's excellent performance, distinguished service, professionalism, and good cheer paved the way for more African Americans to secure appointments in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and other important House institutions, earned her the respect and friendship of her colleagues, and endeared her to Members of Congress.

This month, December 2013, Nikki Mayes retires after 36 years of faithful, honorable, and distinguished service to the United States House of Representatives and the people of the United States.

I know my colleagues join me in extending our thanks and appreciation to Nikki for her service to our nation and our very best wishes for a happy and productive retirement.

I know how much she is looking forward to spending more time with her family, including her sons John Mayes III, who works for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and David, who works for the Department of Homeland Security; and her daughter, Tira, who is a forensic specialist with the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department.

Inspired by her example, each of Nikki's children learned the value of helping others

and chose a public service career. That is perhaps the greatest testament to the character of this great public servant.

Mr. Speaker, Nicarsia "Nikki" Mayes is a wonderful human being, a great friend, and one of the finest public servants I have the honor to know. She will be greatly missed but not ever forgotten.

PASS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. SWALWELL of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening, this Congress defied a rocky trajectory that has defined the past year of government shutdowns and starting with the fiscal cliff by passing a 2-year compromise budget deal. I worked with you, Mr. Speaker, and others in our bipartisan United Solutions Caucus to support this bipartisan compromise, knowing that it is not the deal that ideally I would want. It doesn't do enough to restore Head Start funding or NIH funding, but it is a compromise and it is a step forward.

Now I am asking my colleagues in this Chamber, let's build on this momentum. Today I am ending a 24-hour fast for comprehensive immigration reform. I will end it in about one hour. Let's come back in January and do the right thing for the people in our country who are living in the shadows, the undocumented immigrants; and let's finally pass comprehensive immigration reform and build on the momentum we showed we can do tonight.

TRIBUTE TO NICARSIA MAYES ON HER RETIREMENT

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to pay tribute to a very special lady, Nicarsia "Nikki" Mayes, the first African American woman to serve as a doorkeeper of the House of Representatives. She started her service in September of 1977 and after today will retire after 36 years of service.

She has always served every day with a warm smile, pleasant greeting, encouraging and kind words, and the highest level of professionalism. So we want to just say tonight that we thank you for your 36 years of excellent service to the House of Representatives and to all of us, and wish you a wonderful retirement.

□ 1900

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a letter that I re-

ceived from a constituent who is about to have her unemployment benefits cut. I quote:

Now that I am laid off and older, I am having difficulty finding a job. I understand now I cannot get unemployment extension. I have never collected anything in my life. So now what? I am going to be homeless. I do not qualify for anything because I made too much money. I have spent my savings, applied for 500-plus jobs to an aimless black hole. What am I going to do? A homeless shelter? My credit is damaged and soon I will not pass a background check. I do not qualify for retraining programs, et cetera, because I have excellent skill sets. All I hear is I am in a perfect storm, "Sorry, you are not alone."

I have been a productive member of society for many years and do not consider myself a "taker." How many unemployed will lose their homes, dignity, and hope? I wanted you to know.

So, to my constituent, I do know and Americans know. It was wrong to leave without fixing this problem.

TRIBUTE TO NICARISA MAYES

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, in addition to saluting and congratulating our colleague and friend, Congressman MEL WATT, I want to rise and salute our friend Nikki Mayes tonight.

Nikki, I just have to say to you first of all, I was a staffer for Ron Dellums when I first met Nikki, and I know tonight Ron would want to salute you, congratulate you, and thank you so much for your 36 years of service. So on behalf of Ron Dellums and myself, let me just say what a great role model you have been for all of us.

I also want to thank you for helping us navigate this great institution. We will always remember you. We will cherish your friendship. And I want to say to you that, as you start this new chapter of your life, I hope you get some rest and I hope you have a lot of fun.

Thank you, again, Nikki.

HOLIDAY GREETING TO OUR TROOPS

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank all of our brave heroes who are serving overseas and are not home with their families this holiday season. While most of us will be returning to our homes to celebrate with family and friends, let us not forget all of the men and women serving our country who will not be able to be with their loved ones.

My region of Illinois is home to thousands of veterans who have served honorably in wartime and peacetime. It is also home to many Active Duty servicemembers, National Guard members, and Ready Reservists.

I was heartened to learn recently that the Peoria-based Army National

Guard unit is expected to come home before the holidays. This will surely be an early Christmas present for many families across the region of the country I am here to serve. I look forward to welcoming them home.

All of our servicemembers deserve our full support year-round, but let us please take this holiday season as an opportunity to thank them for their sacrifices that they have given to their families and to our country. Let us be there for them now, because they are there for us.

AMERICA CAN DO BETTER

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as we end this particular legislative session, I just wanted to rise and say that, on the one hand, the vast majority of Members voted to run the government of the United States prudently and within budget and to operate as adults over the next 2 years; on the other hand, the lack of a provision in that bill to accommodate those who are unemployed across this country is a sad commentary on the leadership of this House.

In the State of Ohio where Speaker BOEHNER hails from, over half of the counties in Ohio are above the national unemployment average of 7 percent, which is way too high for the country as a whole. For us as a Chamber not to be able to include, especially before Christmas and the holiday season, the extension of unemployment benefits even for a few months for people who will now face Christmas and the new year with even more worry and hardship is unconscionable for this Nation. I just know that we are capable of better.

I would suggest to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee that if you shaved 1 percent off of every account in the discretionary part of the budget, you would be able to find the money to extend the benefits for 3 more months, and then we can look toward a more permanent solution from the Ways and Means Committee.

I am thankful for the opportunity to make this important statement for the RECORD. America can do better for our unemployed.

NELSON MANDELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise at this moment for the House to appropriately acknowledge the life and legacy, the truly extraordinary leadership, of President Nelson Mandela who has passed on to history now but who, during his 95 years, played an extraordinary role in the life of his country

and his countrymen. And this Congress played a part in that process through the debates on this floor and through, finally, the passage of sanctions and then, even more so, by overriding the Presidential veto and putting into place sanctions that President Mandela indicated and all recognized played an important role in ending apartheid in South Africa.

There are Members who are no longer Members of the House, some of whom have even passed on themselves. There was Congressman Bill Gray from Philadelphia, who authored the sanctions legislation; Congressman Dellums, who had previously authored and fought side by side; and many members of the Congressional Black Caucus and others, Democrats and Republicans, on the floor of this House who were involved in this activity.

I rise for this Special Order to appropriately pay tribute to the leadership that was exhibited by President Mandela and his African National Congress. I am going to yield to Members for an opportunity for them to reflect on the life of President Mandela. Obviously, we recognize that he was born and that he died, that he went to school and he played certain roles in his profession as a lawyer, but he has also been recognized around the world for the struggle that he led and that he dedicated his life to.

I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Mr. FATTAH, for leading this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the life and legacy of former South African President Nelson Mandela, a relentless pioneer for justice, equality, and democracy.

I am proud to say that members of the Congressional Black Caucus stood with President Mandela before it was popular or politically advantageous. Working with grassroots advocates, members of the Congressional Black Caucus and many others from across the world, Mandela activated a movement that not only spoke of democracy and equality, but realized those principles through action, meaningful action that ultimately broke the chains of apartheid and will be forever remembered as the legacy of Madiba.

Today, the CBC salutes the life of a world leader who sacrificed a lifetime for the ideals of democracy. Today, we celebrate the life of a man from humble beginnings who overcome the obstacles of racial intolerance and rose to lead a country and a people to prosperity and freedom. Today, we cherish the life of a President who led with dignity and strength. Today, we treasure the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela. Madiba, you will forever be remembered.

Mr. FATTAH. I thank the gentlewoman, and I thank her for her leadership on this House floor on behalf of not just the people she represents in Ohio, but throughout the country.

I now yield to someone who is no stranger to struggle. Nelson Mandela, when asked about his life being a struggle, he said, No, you misinterpret; the struggle was my life. Well, the struggle is this gentleman's life. I yield to the gentleman from the great State of Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague for yielding.

I rise to join my colleagues to pay tribute to a man I deeply admire, President Nelson Mandela.

When I first met Mr. Mandela, I felt as if I was touching the spirit of greatness. He was tall and graceful with the common spirit of the Dalai Lama. President Mandela was one of those rare individuals, like Gandhi, Lincoln, or King, who come along only once in a generation and who are a lesson to all humanity. They teach us not just to liberate the body, but to free our minds and unleash the power of the human spirit.

This weekend, I had the honor of traveling with Members of the House and one Member of the Senate to attend an official memorial service in South Africa. I would like to thank the Speaker and his staff for working with Chairwoman Fudge to ensure that Congress was represented at this global tribute.

Tonight, I express my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of President Mandela. To the people of South Africa and the global community, we have lost a giant of a man who embodied grace, dignity, and peace. He just walked out of prison after 27 years without any bitterness, hostility, or hatred. And through the power of love and complete forgiveness, President Mandela not only freed the oppressed, but he also freed the oppressor.

What we know of his long walk to freedom, what he endured and what he overcome, has made us all a little more human. What he taught us about reconciliation, love, and inner peace inspires each and every person who knows his story to be better, stronger, more loving, more peaceful citizens of the global community. He was the father of a new South Africa who helped build a new nation, more focused on unity today than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, during the height of the civil rights movement, the chant of the African people became our chant: "One man, one vote." He was a great leader, but I never thought that I would have the honor of meeting him and calling him my friend, my brother.

During this holiday season, I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in both Chambers will use this time to reflect on how we can be representatives of the people, can continue to work in unity, extend the legacy of love of service and respect for all humankind as Mr. NELSON Mandela did.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I met President Mandela on a number of occasions, both in Philadelphia and here