

TRIBUTE TO FARGO MAYOR  
DENNIS WALAKER

**HON. KEVIN CRAMER**

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 4, 2014*

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, the good people of Fargo, North Dakota have broken hearts today. Their mayor, Dennis Walaker, died suddenly this week, sending a wave of emotion across my entire state.

Mayor Walaker epitomized what it means to be the people's servant, not because he was perfect—he certainly was not—but because he was as common as an uncommon politician can be.

Denny earned the top job in the city by virtue of his service as a city employee famous for fighting floods. The legend was solidified as he defied the feds and the odds by applying his uncommon common sense to the 2009 record flood fight, keeping his city safe and his people in their homes.

While Denny's famous flood fights put him on a big stage, it was the character of the man that was really under the spotlight more than his competence as a civil engineer.

Denny was always where he needed to be. He wore a suit and tie when he had to, but was more comfortable wearing, well, more comfortable clothes. It's hard to describe without cliché, but Denny was loved because he was one of the people he represented, whoever they were.

He was one of "them."

He was always available and accountable, and expected the same of other public officials at every level. Denny's communication style was more blunt than eloquent, but always memorable and effective. While he didn't shy away from criticizing legislators at the state and federal levels—in fact he seemed to relish it—he wasn't offensive. Perhaps because he expected the same clarity from us as he provided to us.

He was a good example to all of us. Not every politician could or even should match his personality or style; we should strive to match his character.

I pray for Denny's family and our city as we mourn, but am confident the memories we carry will keep him close to us for a very long time.

IN HONOR OF STEVE PRICE

**HON. SAM FARR**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 4, 2014*

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and my dear friend and colleague Representative LOIS CAPPs to honor the career of a remarkable public servant whose work and character should serve as a model for us all. Mr. Steve Price is retiring from CalTrans after nearly 35 years in various engineering positions. In that time Steve carved out a reputation for integrity and unfailing honesty. If it could be done, Steve would make it happen. If an idea was impractical, Steve let you know. Simply put, Steve made government—at least the portion that he controlled—work for the people of California.

We had the great pleasure to getting to know Steve in his capacity as the maintenance supervisor for CalTrans District 5, which encompasses both of our congressional districts. California's Highway 1 connects our districts from Moro Bay and Hearst Castle in the south up through Carmel and Monterey in the north. Along the way the road passes through Big Sur and offers one of the most spectacular views of land and sea anywhere in the world. But as Steve likes to remind us all, that land has been falling into the sea for eons and the highway's construction 80 years ago did nothing to slow that. So every time a slide, wildfire, or washed out bridge closes the highway, we find ourselves sitting at the table with Steve and the local community working out solutions to keep the coast highway open. And it has been in those community settings that Steve's particular brand of diplomacy made its greatest impact. Where some work to sooth community anxieties with gentle words and reassuring platitudes, Steve offers unvarnished honesty. Steve's presence in the room always helped bring the conversation back to the practical.

But above all, Steve was a tremendously skilled and innovative engineer. He has been a strong advocate for worker safety and sought out opportunities to include maintenance staff in the project design process. Steve has received a Tranny Award in 1995 for leading the Caltrans effort on the Hearst Scenic Conservation purchase; acted as the Interim State Traffic engineer; participated in Transportation Research Board study on Design of In-Vehicle Driving Behavior and Crash Risk Study; received the Karl Moskowitz award for Outstanding Engineering in Transportation in 2014; and served as the State Pavement Engineer in 2014, just to name a few accomplishments. He has also applied his engineering skills to aid in Haiti's recovery from the devastating 2010 earthquake.

Mr. Speaker, we know we speak for the whole House in offering this body's gratitude for a job well done. Steve's leadership will be missed by us, his colleagues, and numerous communities up and down the Central Coast. We wish Steve and his family every success in retirement and can rest assured that his voice will continue to be heard.

HONORING THE PUBLIC SERVICE  
OF MARY J. ARMSTRONG

**HON. GLORIA NEGRETE McLEOD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 4, 2014*

Mrs. NEGRETE McLEOD. Mr. Speaker, Mary J. Armstrong served as my District Representative for California's 35th Congressional District, which includes the communities of Bloomington, Chino, Fontana, Montclair, Ontario, Rialto in San Bernardino County, and the city of Pomona in Los Angeles County.

Mary J. Armstrong capacity of responsibilities included preparing and presenting certificates of recognition, assisting with the planning of community events and attending committee hearings and meetings.

Mary J. Armstrong managed and researched constituents' casework, not limited to staffing me at various events and meetings as needed and represented me on occasion,

worked as a liaison with federal agencies and addressed a variety of issues and concerns of the constituents of the 35th Congressional District.

Having served the State of California for eleven years, Mary J. Armstrong began her legislative career in 2003, with Assembly Member Mervyn M. Dymally, representing the 52nd Assembly District and transitioned to the 32nd Senatorial District, and two years with the 35th Congressional District with me.

Mary and her husband, Jesse Armstrong, are the proud parents of four Children, Stephanie, Calvin, Anthony and Angela, and grandparents of six grandchildren and one great grand child.

Mary J. Armstrong is dependable, adaptable and a resourceful team player, she possesses the persistence and personality to excel in competitive markets and dynamic fast-paced environments and she rendered outstanding service to me in providing quality service to the people of the 32nd Senatorial District and the 35th Congressional District and throughout the State of California.

Mr. Speaker, I fully extend all due recognition to Mary J. Armstrong for her many exceptional achievements and personal loyalty for exemplifying the character and proficiency that mark the best of California's legislative staff.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 1, 2014*

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply dismayed and concerned by the decision of the grand jury not to indict Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson in the shooting of Michael Brown. Based on my interaction with constituents I expect that many thousands of others share that response and will express their concerns in peaceful public protests. I call upon law enforcement in Missouri, and all across our nation, to show all possible restraint and sensitivity and allow the American people to exercise their First Amendment right and responsibility in expressing their opinions over this event and similar recent events.

The events leading to the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager, mirror a horrifying string of similar deaths and shootings of African American men at the hands of law enforcement all across the country which seem to have escalated in recent weeks: Eric Garner (43), Staten Island, New York—July 17; John Crawford (22), Beavercreek, Ohio—August 5; Ezell Ford (25), Los Angeles, California—August 11; Dante Parker, Victorville, California—August 12; Levar Jones (35), Columbia, South Carolina—September 4 and most recently Tamir E. Rice (12) in Cleveland, Ohio—November 23. According to the Chicago Tribune (8/26/2014) "Chicago police shot 36 people last year, 26 of them African American males, and have shot 34 people so far this year." The circumstances surrounding many of those shootings remain unclear or unknown. The emerging pattern of these events raise significant, troubling questions about the protection of the civil rights of Americans, especially young African American males, in encounters with law enforcement.

The sense of frustration and anger felt by so many African Americans, especially young African Americans, is understandable. There remain great inequities in the functioning of our criminal justice system, inequities which are also still found in housing, finance, employment, and electoral politics. History suggests that the reduction of these inequities come only after sustained, unrelenting public protest, unified community resistance and economic, legal and political action. The progress we have made as a nation in securing equality and social justice has been uneven and intermittent. There have been periods of backlash and backsliding but over the years the end result has been slow, but relentless progress in repealing and reversing legal, social and economic injustices.

The question before us now is how best to protect our youth, how to end violence, including police violence in our community. Times like this bring to the surface powerful emotions and the temptation to lose faith in our still too often imperfect democratic process. Peoples of nations around the world which either have never established democratic institutions and processes or have given up on perfecting them have paid a horrible, and unnecessary, price. Now is a time to make our laws and law enforcement work for our community, not against our community. Now is the time for us to redouble our determination to reform and strengthen our system of laws and law enforcement, not to abandon it for a brief moment of street rage.

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 1, 2014*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Ferguson Grand Jury's decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for the August 9th shooting of unarmed teenager Michael Brown is a grave injustice. This decision plays into the deeply painful narrative, held in the hearts of many African Americans, that the lives of young black men are not valued in this country. While this notion may seem hard to believe for some, it is a reality for many minorities, as we continually see our justice system betray us. Most disturbing about the death of Michael Brown is the chilling fact that he is not the first unarmed African American man to die at the hands of police officers who were not held accountable for their actions. When I think of Michael Brown, I think of Edward Garner, Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Anthony Lee, and Oscar Grant. I think of the futures that could have been, and the pain and suffering brought to their families. How many more lives will we lose before deciding to bring about meaningful change?

As the proud mother of a black man and grandmother to three grandsons, I cannot imagine the depth of the wound left in the hearts of Lesley McSpadden and Michael Brown Sr. As a Member of Congress who represents a predominantly minority community similar to Ferguson, I mourn for the societal ills faced by my constituents, the people of Ferguson and communities of color around the country. I share in their sense of hurt and

anger. Our charge now is to harness that anger into constructive change, initiating dialogue with our community members, our elected officials, and our police departments, to ensure that there are no more senseless tragedies.

We are never wrong for heralding the call for justice. However, it is time for us to evaluate our methods for sounding that call. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said: "we must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." At a time when it may seem easy to retreat to our respective corners, we should instead seek understanding and acceptance from one another, by working together to secure a better future for our sons.

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 1, 2014*

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Congressmen JEFFRIES and HORSFORD for hosting this important Special Order. I appreciate your leadership in organizing these important discussions.

We stand here tonight, once again, to talk about the ongoing and systematic failure of our justice system. I am deeply disappointed at last week's decision by the grand jury in Ferguson to not indict Officer Darren Wilson. I share the feelings of frustration, anger and disappointment by the recent decision.

And the protests that have spread across the country are a testament to that frustration and anger.

How many more deaths like Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Oscar Grant—one of my constituents—Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice will be tolerated until America decides that black lives matter? How many more jail beds will be filled by black and brown men and boys until we realize America has a deep and long rooted systematic problem that must be addressed? The killing of Michael Brown has, once again, confronted us with the systematic issues of racism and injustice that are endemic in our society.

In a recently published op-ed in The Washington Post, Stacy Patton writes: "Black America has again been reminded that its children are not worthy of being alive—in part because they are not seen as children at all, but as menacing threats to white lives."

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough.

Disparity and inequality continue at every level of our society—a legacy born in the suffering of the Middle Passage, nurtured through slavery and preserved with Jim Crow. Today, we see this in the form of things like repressive voter ID laws, economic inequality, and mass incarceration.

The African American poverty rate of 27.2 percent is more than two and half times the poverty rate of white Americans. The 10.9 percent unemployment rate among African American is nearly twice the national average.

These statistics paint a clear picture of inequality in America yet we continue to ignore these disparities. This cannot continue.

To quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they

become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress."

Mr. Speaker—the only way we can remove the dam is by addressing the deep and long-rooted structures that continue to disproportionately affect people of color.

And Congress is the body in which to do it. We were sent to Washington by our constituents to address the issues facing our nation—let's start working on the structural and racial biases that pervade our institutions.

I applaud the President for calling for a \$263 million spending package to reform police departments. But much more work remains to be done.

We have a duty to pick up the banner carried by Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and Medger Evers, to ensure that our children and our children's children can live in a world free of ignorance, discrimination and racism.

That is why we must pass legislation that will require the Department of Justice to support training programs for police departments to reduce racial bias and profiling. We need legislation and funding programs that focuses on diversity hiring and retention of officers in communities that need them the most. We need to pass legislation like H.R. 5478, the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act, of which I am a proud cosponsor.

As a nation, we have made progress against racism but we are backsliding.

We are losing the prize that our forefathers and mothers fought, bled and died to obtain and preserve. We must stand together—stronger than ever—to raise our voices, march in the streets, and cast our ballots demanding change. The soul of our nation is at stake.

The American dream of equality, freedom, liberty, justice and life for all can and should be more than just words. It should be a promise to all Americans, regardless of the color of their skin or where they were born.

It should mean that for every mother or father, regardless of their race or socio-economic status, that they can look across the dinner table from their son or daughter and know that they can and will have a better life than their parents. That they will be protected and judged equally under the law. That their son or daughter will be at the table again tomorrow night.

A world where justice for all is fulfilled.

#### UNITED STATES-ISRAEL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 3, 2014*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support S. 2673, the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014.

I rise to reiterate my support of our strategic ally, and the only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel.

I want to applaud my colleagues in the House and Senate for passing this legislation. It is vital that Israel and the U.S. continue to protect our shared values including our commitment to liberty, equality and religious freedom.

I am pleased to offer my support to the legislation that shares technology, prioritizes