

TRIBUTE TO CHERRI BRANSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cherri Branson on the occasion of her retirement from the United States House of Representatives, after more than twenty-four years of faithful and dedicated service. She is the kind of public servant who brings credit to this institution and the people we are honored to serve.

Cherri began her long and multi-faceted career in the House in 1989 and, over two decades, has served in various policy, legal and legislative positions, including Legislative Counsel, Legislative Director, and Committee Counsel.

I first became familiar with Cherri in the late 1990s, in the course of pursuing justice for African-American farmers who, for decades, had been systematically discriminated against by the Agriculture Department. That long-fought effort culminated in the enactment of statutory language that set the stage for a landmark discrimination settlement for impacted farmers (*Pigford v. Glickman*).

It was not until 2005, when I became the Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, that Cherri began working for me. In her time on the Committee, she rose through the ranks and, at retirement, was serving as the Chief Counsel for Oversight.

Among her key accomplishments on the Committee was the oversight work she led in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The investigations that she oversaw in the wake of this massive disaster shed light on waste, fraud, and unfair practices that harmed not only impacted individuals, but the American taxpayer. This oversight set the stage for meaningful reforms to help bring about a fair and equitable distribution of resources to survivors of the disaster, better processes to ensure distribution of immediate relief in a timely manner, and more opportunities for impacted local, small, minority and women-owned businesses to participate in recovery efforts.

On the Committee, she has led investigations of national significance, including the investigation of the White House State Dinner Security Breach (the Salahi case) which led to tightened security procedures within the Secret Service's Presidential Protection process.

Prior to joining the Committee, Cherri conducted investigations with the House of Representatives Government Reform (Oversight) Committee. The most notable outcomes of those investigations included the strengthening of protections for children involved in medical clinical trials, equitable tax treatment for Holocaust survivors, and several reviews of federal policies concerning illicit drugs.

During her career in the House, Cherri has directly served on the staffs of Members of Congress from diverse geographic and demographic areas, including New York, Texas, Michigan, Illinois, Hawaii, California and Mississippi. Through her work on behalf of Committee Members, she has come to know and appreciate the concerns of Americans in nearly every corner of the country.

In her work in the House, Cherri displayed that rare combination of steadfast and reliable care for ordinary Americans and a skillful ability to do battle on their behalf.

Even as Cherri closes a chapter of distinction and accomplishment in the House of Representatives, she continues to dedicate her diverse talents to serving others. She, quite literally, is living the famous adage coined by former Speaker of the House, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr.—“all politics is local”—by taking on the responsibility of representing the residents of Maryland's Montgomery County District 5 on the County Council.

On behalf of myself, the Democratic Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, and this institution, I extend my sincere appreciation to Cherri for all her great work. I also wish to acknowledge her loving family—husband Donald, and son, Avery—on their contributions. I urge Members to join me in extending our best wishes to Cherri upon her retirement and in her future endeavors.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 4

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Stanley Fischer, of New York, Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, and Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, all to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and J. Mark McWatters, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Credit Union Administration.

SD-538

3 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs

To hold hearings to examine strengthening United States alliances in Northeast Asia.

SD-419

MARCH 5

Time to be announced

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SR-253

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SH-216

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of L. Reginald Brothers, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, and Francis Xavier Taylor, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, both of the Department of Homeland Security.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold hearings to examine national security space launch programs.

SD-192

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SD-G50

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

To hold hearings to examine developments in the Western Balkans and policy responses, focusing on policy approaches of the United States toward the countries of the Western Balkans.

SD-106

10:30 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015.

SD-608

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015.

SD-215

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Business meeting to consider the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

SR-428A

2:15 p.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine income security and the elderly, focusing on securing gains made in the war on poverty.

SD-562

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine nuclear forces and policies in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-222

MARCH 6

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States Central Command and United States Africa Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for

fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the American Veterans (AMVETS), Blinded Veterans Association, Jewish War Veterans, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, National Guard Association of the United States, The Retired Enlisted Association, Vietnam Veterans of America.

CHOB-345

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Timothy G. Massad, of Connecticut, to be Chairman, Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, and J. Christopher Giancarlo, of New Jersey, all to be a Commissioner, all of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

SR-328A

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight

To hold an oversight hearing to examine contractor performance information.

SD-342

11 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security

To hold hearings to examine enhancing our rail safety, focusing on current challenges for passenger and freight rail.

SR-253

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine Syria spill-over, focusing on the growing threat of terrorism and sectarianism in the Middle East.

SD-419

MARCH 11

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

To hold closed hearings to examine United States Special Operations Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SR-222

MARCH 12

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of multiple veterans service organizations.

SD-G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine military space programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-222

MARCH 13

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States Northern Command and United States Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

MARCH 25

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea in re-

view of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

MARCH 26

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion.

SD-G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the the current readiness of United States forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-232A

MARCH 27

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

APRIL 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-G50

APRIL 10

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-106