

have been instrumental in almost every major piece of domestic policy legislation in the last few decades and have improved the lives of countless Americans and millions overseas.

As long as GEORGE and HENRY have been in Congress, those who had long been ignored by Washington have been heard. Poor people, the sick, persecuted minorities around the world, and our nation's children have all been lifted up by the work of these two men.

During his 40 years in Congress, GEORGE chaired three committees—the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, the Natural Resources Committee, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce—and through them fought for high quality education not just for a select few students but for all. He has worked to strengthen environmental protections even in the face of aggressive opposition from entrenched interests, and for safe conditions and a living wage for workers in America and overseas.

GEORGE is blessed with boundless energy and has never been satisfied to rest on his laurels—staying engaged to ensure that the bills he has passed are implemented and improved upon. He wrote the legislation that successfully raised the minimum wage in 2007 and has written the bill to increase it again.

He worked across the aisle to write and pass No Child Left Behind and has not wavered from his efforts to improve and fund it.

Beyond his extensive legislative achievements, GEORGE has touched so many lives, including mine when I interned in his office as a college student. At the time, I never imagined I would one day serve alongside him, but it has been a great honor.

HENRY WAXMAN has similarly focused a wide array of causes, focusing on investigating companies whose products had harmed consumers, and questioning and holding accountable corporate executives on behalf of those who otherwise had no opportunity to seek justice.

As Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Committee, HENRY investigated waste, fraud and abuse in the tobacco, finance and energy industries to name only a few.

Conducting investigations and oversight was not enough for him, once he exposed wrongdoing, he would work, sometimes for decades, to translate his findings into legislation. As Chairman of the Energy and Commerce he helped write and oversaw the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the culmination of lifelong work on behalf of uninsured Americans.

HENRY's commitment to human rights, especially the persecution of religious minorities in the former Soviet Union and Iran has given hope to those without hope. His steadfast support of Israel has ensured that our two nations will remain allies and partners.

As dean of the Los Angeles delegation, HENRY has been both a leader on issues facing Angelenos, and a mentor. I consider myself privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him.

Our state and the nation have been lucky to have the decades of service that GEORGE and HENRY have given us. They will be missed from the halls of Congress, but their legacy will continue to shape this institution and nation for decades to come.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, for the past 22 years, I've had the privilege of working along-

side one of the greatest statesmen this institution has ever known—Congressman GEORGE MILLER.

Throughout his 40-year career, Congressman MILLER's work has transformed the lives of children and families, hard working people and our environment. From our country's education system, to labor, to health policy and the preservation of our natural resources, Congressman MILLER has left lasting and profoundly important imprints on our society. From the first day he stepped into the halls of Congress and ever since, he's been a true reformer for the American people.

Congressman MILLER was instrumental in passing the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which curbs pay discrimination against women. In 1975, he championed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which for the first time provided children with special needs a free and appropriate public education.

Congressman MILLER paved the way to dramatically improve the quality of meals for children at schools with the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010, and spearheaded transformative legislation to save students billions of dollars in student loan costs while serving as Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee. In 1982, he passed the landmark Pay-Go Act to reduce the deficit, instill greater discipline in the budget process, and ensure that military and non-military spending is considered equally.

Congressman MILLER chaired the House Natural Resources Committee and delivered the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, which established Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave Desert National Preserve. He also unlocked longstanding and fiercely defended taxpayer subsidized domination of California's scarce water resources by agribusiness, quite literally saving our fisheries and water quality.

His accomplishments are countless and far reaching, and his tenacious pursuit to serve his constituents and the American people resonates throughout each and every one of his victories, as well as his defeats.

Nearly every weekend for 40 years, Congressman MILLER has traveled home to his district in the East Bay of San Francisco from Washington, D.C. It's where he has drawn his strength, his inspiration, and his desire to keep fighting the good fight.

GEORGE, you are my brother, my confidant, and I will forever keep in my heart the time we spent working together in Congress. I wish you, Cynthia, your sons and grandchildren every blessing, and know that your tireless spirit will forever be a part of this sacred institution.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the legislative giants of our era. A man who I am proud to call my colleague and my friend, Congressman GEORGE MILLER.

GEORGE first came to Congress as part of the legendary "Watergate Class" of 1974. In the four decades that GEORGE has been a member of this chamber, he has played a key role in the passage of some of our nation's most important education, labor, and health statutes.

GEORGE has served as chairman of three committees: the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, the Committee on Natural Resources, and the Committee on Education and Labor. He continues his legacy

of leadership to this day as co-chair of the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee.

GEORGE has been a tenacious fighter in support of workers' rights, students and teachers, workplace safety, the environment, and a livable wage for all working Americans.

As a card carrying member of the Communications Workers of America and someone who shares GEORGE's commitment for working Americans, Congressman MILLER has been a colleague I have continued to look to on issues important to the labor community.

Before I close, I would like to thank GEORGE for his decades of public service on behalf of our nation's working families. Our chamber will be losing one of the true lions of our generation and I wish him and his family all the best.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of our Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, tonight we celebrate my friend and esteemed colleague, Chairman Doc HASTINGS, for his 20 years of dedicated service in the United States House of Representatives.

Doc has been a constant source of wisdom, of compassion, of patience, and of leadership for our Chamber, and I know that he will be sorely missed by all who have had the pleasure of working with him.

Every day he has represented the people of the Tri-Cities, Yakima, Moses Lake, and all of Central Washington with his tireless commitment.

When he first came to Congress in 1995 to represent Washington's Fourth Congressional District, he came with his sleeves rolled up ready to get things done. He didn't come to seek the spotlight. He came to Congress to help the people of Central Washington in every way he could, to make their lives better, and that is exactly what he has done.

In his years on Capitol Hill, Doc has been a humble leader and a masterful legislator. It was in 1974 when Doc entered politics. He was elected Franklin County Republican Party Chair and served Franklin County with his tremendous work ethic and attention to detail.

As a proud early supporter of Ronald Reagan, it wasn't long before Doc was chosen as a delegate for Ronald Reagan at the 1976 Republican National Convention.

He went on to serve as a faithful representative in the State legislature

from 1979 to 1987. He first ran for Congress in 1992 and came up a little short, but that didn't deter him. In 1994 he ran again, and he soon came to our Nation's Capitol after winning a race against then-incumbent and current Governor of Washington State, Jay Inslee.

That year, Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years, and Doc embodied that spirit of hard work and determination. In all the years I have known him, I have marveled at his ability to get things done without seeking the limelight.

When I came to Congress, I quickly learned that when Doc spoke, people listened. It is because of him that BPA rate increases in the Pacific Northwest were limited. It is because of him that those back home didn't see their electric rates skyrocket.

And it is because of his relationships, both here and at home, that we have been able to build upon the foundation of our economy. It is because of him that we have been able to move forward on so many effective economic solutions for the Pacific Northwest.

Doc has been a steady hand and an instrumental leader in his chairmanship of the House Committee on Natural Resources, and on the House Committee on Ethics.

In his recent work as Natural Resources Chairman, Doc worked to reform the 24-year old Endangered Species Act in an effort to improve species recovery, reduce ESA-related litigation, and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently and wisely. He worked to make the law work for both species and for people.

His focus has always been on making laws more efficient and effective to help people, and this is no exception. Regardless of the issue, whether it is energy, healthy forests, protecting our dams, irrigation, agriculture, or manufacturing, Doc has championed countless policies that have driven our economy in the Pacific Northwest.

Serving as founder and chairman of the House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus, Doc has tirelessly educated his colleagues about cleaning up nuclear waste created by World War II and Cold War-era nuclear weapon production programs. The program includes waste at Hanford site, which is the world's largest and most complex environmental cleanup effort, and it is Doc who has worked to ensure that cleanups move forward safely and efficiently, and it is Doc that helped the Tri-Cities community prepare for the post-cleanup era.

It goes without saying that those in Washington State are better because of Doc's service. As cochair of the bipartisan Congressional Northwest Energy Caucus, Doc has worked to promote cooperation on issues that impact the continued availability of low-cost hydropower.

He gave us the opportunity to work together on policies like protecting the

Northwest's important source of renewable hydropower, addressing the future of the Columbia River Treaty, protecting the Snake River Dams, and integrating wind energy into BPA's transmission systems.

Under Doc's guidance, we have had the opportunity to collaborate to promote a strong future for our regional power system.

As a master of all things rules, he knows the rules better than just about anyone. The Speaker could always turn to him when he needed a steady hand who understood the rules.

What I admire most about Doc is that he is kind and selfless. He is as kind and selfless as he is brilliant.

When our son, Cole, was born, and after he was diagnosed with Down syndrome, Doc was the one that welcomed us back and introduced Cole to the world on the House floor. He is an invaluable legislator, an unmatched mentor, and a man I am proud to call my friend.

Doc's family has always come first. His wife, Claire, has been his partner, by his side 20 years now in service, and I can say from experience it is not easy to have your family on one coast when you are on the other.

Claire and the entire Hastings family have always been a source of continued commitment and unconditional love, and I know Doc feels so blessed to have had that unwavering support.

I thank the Hastings family for sharing with America a tremendous and invaluable leader. His heart has always been with his children and grandchildren, and I know that he will be glad to be able to spend some more time with them.

Doc has filled the role of dean of the Washington delegation, and he is going to be missed. While this great leader will no longer walk the Halls of Congress every day, this institution is better and stronger for having had him here. Doc will be missed every day, but his legacy will live on in Congress and, of course, all across Eastern Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS), chairman of our Appropriation Committee.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I will not be lengthy, but I will be very serious.

There are very few people that I have served with in this body these 34 years for me who has more respect and more friends than Doc HASTINGS.

We are personal friends. We are professional friends. And when our wives are back home, we frequently have dinner together, and we talk a lot of politics, we talk about things going on at home, talk about things going on here in this body and the world.

There is nobody more knowledgeable of politics in America than Doc HASTINGS. He knows every congressional district. He knows the politics of that district, and that makes for some great, great conversation.

But I think the most important thing that I could say about Doc HASTINGS is his character, the character that he possesses. Someone once said that "Character is doing the right thing when nobody is looking."

I have seen, time and again, Doc faced with an opportunity, perhaps, that would have meant taking advantage of someone or not doing the right thing, and he always does the right thing. And so that character, that inner being that radiates out to the world, comes through that balding head and reaches out to the world.

Most people don't realize that Doc HASTINGS is one of the biggest NASCAR fans in America. He travels to watch the cars. And of course, most of those started out in the South and still principally are. But Doc loves the NASCAR world, so that makes him a southerner, which is another reason I admire the man.

Well, we are going to miss this man. He has served so well here in so many different important roles: chairman of the Ethics Committee that looks after the ethics of Members of Congress; of course, on the Rules Committee, the hardest working assignment I think anyone has, and his service there was superlative; and of course, the chair he now holds, that has turned out more bills, I dare say, than any other committee of the Congress. I mean, it seems like every day there is a string of Hastings bills that are being considered by the floor.

He is a strong worker, a hard worker. He is conscientious in his work. He is approachable and friendly and likes to take advice.

□ 2030

So we are going to miss this man, and we hope that the folks back in the home State appreciate just how well loved Doc HASTINGS is here in the U.S. Congress.

So, Doc, we will miss you. We want you to come back from time to time, and I will even buy you dinner. God bless you.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Washington, Mr. DENNY HECK.

Mr. HECK of Washington. I thank the gentlewoman from Washington State.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge, thank, and pay tribute to the service of Richard "Doc" Hastings on behalf of the people of this country and Washington State.

I have had the privilege to know Doc more than 35 years, and with perverse reference to Mr. ROGERS' earlier comments, I even knew him when he had hair. I had the great privilege to serve in the Washington State House of Representatives with him. We overlapped by 6 or 8 years in the seventies and eighties, and as somebody who wears a different colored jersey—his is red and mine is blue—and this is me engaging in understatement as we had materially different world views—with Doc, it

was never, ever, ever, ever personal. He always has a kind word and, frankly, a ready smile for people.

DOC is now finishing up 10 terms—20 years in this Chamber. I don't know that I have ever adequately thanked him for being the very first person to come to my office and extend his hand in friendship and offer to help me in any way he could 2 years ago—something he probably doesn't even remember, so natural an act it was for him but, frankly, so meaningful for me.

Lest I leave the wrong impression about all of these differences that DOC and I have—oh, and we do—I also want to assuredly assert that he can be every bit as good an ally as he can be an honorable adversary. The gentlewoman from Washington State has mentioned several of the ways in which Congressman HASTINGS has worked collaboratively with all of us, over a long period of time, on behalf of the interests of Washington State: cleaning up Hanford Reservation. I cannot help but note his signature on a letter advocating the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank—a very meaningful gesture on his part and of tremendous economic importance to our State—and even more generic issues.

As a former U.S. Army Reserve veteran himself, Doc is always front and center, standing proud and tall to do what he can on behalf of the men and women who have served in uniform in this State.

I also want to reiterate the gentlewoman from Washington State's acknowledgment of Congressman HASTINGS' skill over the presiding of this Chamber. Most people don't understand what an incredible skill that is to do it with such seeming ease, not just to have command of the rules and of the parliamentary procedures.

The very manner in which you comport yourself, Congressman HASTINGS, is truly a thing to be admired. You did it with grace.

Speaking of grace, more than a year ago, one of my dear, dear friends and mentors—someone who also wears my colored jersey—former Governor Booth Gardner, passed away. Congressman HASTINGS was one of the very first people to take the podium to acknowledge the kindness that Governor Gardner extended to Congressman HASTINGS' family, a gesture which he would be very familiar with because it comes so naturally to him as well.

It is a privilege to know you. It is a privilege to have served with you lo these short 2 years, but I am very proud to have done so. I am proud to have known you all of these years, and I am proud to call you friend, Doc. Most importantly, on behalf of all of the people of Washington State, including the people of the 10th Congressional District, we thank you for your fine, fine public service and for your dedication to all of these issues that you have worked on so ably and in such a dedicated fashion for so many years. Thank you, sir.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you.

I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Vancouver, Washington (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER), our friend and colleague.

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, it is fun to get to come down here and honor my friend and colleague, Chairman DOC HASTINGS from central Washington. It has been a privilege to get to be right adjacent to Doc.

CATHY, we have been on either side.

In being the younger member of the delegation, the newest member of the delegation, I think your time and your effort and your willingness to bring us along—to bring me along—is invaluable. It is impossible to overstate the influence that Doc has had on this body over the last 20 years. He has been a constant advocate, fighting for the people of his home and our State—and our region, really—and the rest of Washington.

You have been doing it since I was in high school, studying U.S. history.

Unlike a lot of politicians, Doc doesn't seek credit or run to the microphone or brag about his accomplishments. He truly lives by one of his favorite quotes: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you are not worried about who gets the credit."

I joined the Washington delegation 4 years ago, and from the beginning, Doc has been incredibly generous to me with his time and his wisdom and even with his dinner invites. Like so many in this body, I truly value his friendship.

During my time here, I have had the privilege—I don't even want to say "of working alongside"—of following along with some of the issues that are incredibly important to my district and of things that Doc has championed. Trust me. Whether it is joining him out at Hanford Nuclear Reservation or teaming up with him to try and advance our Nation's forest policies and best practices, it is plain to see how passionate Doc is about serving the people in central Washington and throughout Washington State.

In this day and age when we hear mostly about a polarized Congress and politicians that no one likes and about people who can't work together, it is important to remember and to focus on those Members who are the opposite—people like Doc—who are always looking to find the common ground, who are looking for solutions, and who are wanting to confront the biggest challenges facing our region. I hope and believe it is how Doc is going to be remembered—as a statesman who always did the right thing by the people at home.

Doc's retirement is certainly a loss for Washington, but I am happy that the pull of being home—the pull of family—has finally won out after having to balance that life on both coasts for so long. When I had my baby girl

last year—it feels like 1,000 years ago—Doc was one of the first to ask how we were, how we were doing, what he could do, and to share in the joy of our miracle, and I am truly grateful.

I know, for me, when I am trying to work an issue and I need advice, I am going to miss being able to say, "Well, what do you think?" "How would we do this?" or "What coalition would we build?" "What is the strategy?" That is one of the biggest things I remembered. I shouldn't say "remembered." He is still with us. One of the biggest things I think of when I think of Doc is that his approach is always: let's lay out the strategy to get to our solutions, and let's try this and talk to this person and do it this way and remember this.

It is that intimate knowledge of how this institution works that we are going to be at a loss for, not just here, but even in the Washington delegation. It is having that institutional knowledge and the relationships, because this place, like anything else, is funneled by relationships. His intimate understanding of that and the way he has worked so carefully with people to advance ideas, we are going to miss it. We are going to feel the loss.

We look forward to hearing from you and watching you enjoy your time at home with your kids and your grandkids. Tell us about how great it is from time to time. We are going to miss you.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you.

In closing, I would say, Doc, on behalf of everyone in Washington State and on behalf of my colleagues here in the House of Representatives, we are grateful for your service, your leadership for our region, and your impact on our lives.

As we walk the Halls of Congress, we often think about those who have gone before us and have walked these halls, and we think about the fact that we stand on the shoulders of giants. You have been a giant in our lives, and you have been a giant for Washington State in Congress, and these are just small tokens of our appreciation for your service. Thank you, Doc. May God bless you, and may God bless your family.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Chairman, thank you very much.

I actually came down to the floor this evening, Mr. Speaker, to give my farewell remarks as I am retiring as well as my good friend, DOC HASTINGS.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to just say what a great human being Doc HASTINGS is and what a pleasure it has been for me in my 12 years. Of course, Doc has been here much longer than I, but to rely on his experience and to draw from that and his wisdom and his judgment and his kindness and his great representation of the people of the great State of

Washington, it is a pleasure to say farewell to Doc.

I hope I will see you again very, very soon. Thank you, Doc.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you very much.

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

AN HONOR TO SERVE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today for, perhaps, my last time speaking as a Member of this institution.

I rise this evening, first and foremost, to pay a debt of gratitude to Georgia's 11th Congressional District and to the people there, who have graciously allowed me the privilege of serving them for these past 12 years.

Growing up modestly in Augusta, Georgia, I would never have dreamed that, someday, I would be standing where I am today, and I would not have had this opportunity if it weren't for my wonderful constituents in north-west Georgia. I may be biased, Mr. Speaker, but I think the people in my district are the nicest and the most hospitable in this country.

So, to them, on behalf of myself, my family, and my staff, I extend my deepest thanks for allowing us to serve you in this House of Representatives.

To my wife, Billie; my three daughters, Gannon, Phyllis, and Laura-Neill; and my son, Billy, I am forever grateful that you all have stayed by my side and that you have supported me throughout my public service. I wouldn't be where I am today without your sacrifices. To my family, a huge, heartfelt thanks.

Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues, it has been the honor of a lifetime to serve with all of you. The respect I have for each and every one transcends ideology and party line. I have made some of the greatest memories of my life with you, and I hope to stay connected with all of you in the years to come.

Of course, in order to be successful in this body, one must have a great staff. Thank you to each and every one of the staffers who has shown such great devotion in serving the people and in helping me to serve them in the 11th District of Georgia.

Thank you all for joining in my fight to protect the freedoms of the Georgians we serve and for working tirelessly for me for a better America.

I entered into Congress during a time of great unrest, not even 2 years after the 9/11 attacks in New York City. Since then, I have been honored to have been a part of this body as it has faced some of the largest challenges of the new millennia: the global war on

terror, the Great Recession, Medicare part D back in 2003, the stimulus response to the financial collapse, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, fighting for fiscal solvency during the fiscal cliff, and a litany of new challenges facing the health care industry due to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

It is my hope that as history examines my actions as a part of this body that the record will show that I always acted and voted the way I thought was in the best interests of the Georgians I served and, of course, this great Nation.

Now, I can't claim to be perfect. Far from it. Not every piece of legislation I championed passed, but no matter the outcome, I take comfort in knowing that the work that I have offered this body has spurred important debate that betters this institution as a whole and, in turn, our country.

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It is that very spirit that led me to cofound the House GOP Doctors Caucus, a group of physicians and health care providers, medical professionals in Congress, people who had served in the medical professions prior to coming here, who utilize our collective first-hand medical expertise to develop patient-centered health reforms for all Americans.

Since the group's founding, we have tackled ObamaCare's threat to the doctor-patient relationship head-on and have played a key role in the fight for SGR reform. That fight continues.

Though it would be hard to let the Doctors Caucus go, to give up that leadership, to say good-bye to my colleagues, I extend my thanks to them, who joined with me as Members of that caucus. And I am confident that the group will continue its valuable work for many, many years to come.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my Democratic colleagues, people like my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), who is sitting here in the Chamber. And I would also like to thank Representative GENE GREEN from Texas and many others for putting party lines aside and joining with me to lead on a number of fights, not the least of which is the threat of antibiotic-resistant "superbugs," a growing threat in hospitals all across the country. We worked so hard on that legislation, and we were so proud to see it pass—yes, in a bipartisan fashion—through the Energy and Commerce Committee under the leadership of Chairman UPTON; the vice chairman of the committee; the ranking member of the committee, HENRY WAXMAN; the chairman of the Health Subcommittee, JOE PITTS; and the ranking member of the Health Subcommittee and now ranking member of the overall committee, Mr. FRANK PALLONE. We worked together. And this is the way that exemplifies what public service should be all about, identifying a problem and then working together to solve it without regard to party lines.

But no matter how many problems we solve, there lay, of course, many hurdles ahead: immigration, continued reckless spending, these new, horrible threats in the Middle East, an ever-growing executive branch, and, of course, as I mentioned, health care.

As an OB/GYN physician, it truly worries me to be leaving Congress at a time when our health care industry has been tipped on its side—I think because of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It is critical that this country find a more sustainable path to creating quality care and access to physicians. Government bureaucrats have no place between doctors and their patients.

But still, in light of these few frustrations, I have great confidence in this body. If history shows us anything, it is that despite the day-to-day angst of gridlock—and there is plenty of that to go around—this institution remains the greatest representative body the world has ever seen. The hurdles we face in this institution are always overcome, sometimes with more grace than others, and it will survive, as it always has. Our system of government is durable, it is resilient, and it is designed to withstand the test of time. It has been my greatest honor to have played even a small part in it.

But now it is time for my wife, Billie, and me to turn the page. We are looking forward to having the opportunity to check a few more boxes before we leave and then spend more time with all the grandchildren back home in Marietta.

So in short, Mr. Speaker, I guess you could say I am proud of the past, and I am excited for what the future may hold. But today, I am just happy to say that I am leaving. I feel confident that this body is better prepared for the future than it was when even I got here.

I want to thank, again, all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, and, of course, last but not least, the people of Georgia's 11th Congressional District for giving me this opportunity, this honor, and this privilege.

And I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I closed without honoring our military heroes, the men and women and their families who have paid so much sacrifice for this great country.

I think over 40 have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and have paid that last full measure.

I just want to say, I will never forget you, Patti and Jamie Saylor, and your great son, your hero Paul, who gave his life for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity and the time tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

REAPPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VITAL AND HEALTH STATISTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment, pursuant to section