

NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

□ 1245

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the National Day of Silence.

Tomorrow is the 18th year we have recognized the National Day of Silence, a day when young people come together to raise awareness for the discrimination that LGBT students face.

I am proud of students who stand up against bullying, students like Karen Jimenez of Aptos, California, who said: "Identity extends further than our physical selves, so when expression of identity becomes restricted, it's similar to having chains placed on your home."

I am a proud sponsor of the Student Non-Discrimination Act and will continue to fight for acceptance and tolerance for LGBT youth. California is a leader in promoting and protecting the rights of our LGBT community.

This year, we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the passage of the Safety and Violence Prevention Act and recent passage of a bill to ensure that trans students are afforded necessary gender neutral facilities in their schools.

We, in Congress, have a responsibility not to be silent. It is our job to speak for those who cannot. We must work harder towards becoming a wholly gender-inclusive society that welcomes and protects all our Members.

HONORING MANO A MANO

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

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mano a Mano on its 15-year anniversary in Round Lake Park and to recognize the staff and volunteers who support this incredible organization.

In 2000, community leaders saw a rise in the Latino immigrant population, as well as the struggles they face due to language barriers and a lack of higher education.

Mr. Speaker, these leaders took it upon themselves to help the growing community through support and education. They opened the doors of Mano a Mano and began providing services such as community school for parents, kindergarten readiness, citizenship preparation, employment connection, and health education.

It is because of organizations like Mano a Mano that families can break down the barriers they face and succeed. Through these services, Mr. Speaker, Mano a Mano has empowered immigrants and underserved families to become proud contributing members of our community.

I congratulate them on their 15-year anniversary.

PAYDAY LENDING REGULATIONS

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

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to talk about the critical need for the stronger oversight of payday lenders.

In March, I welcomed President Obama to the city of Birmingham, in my district, where he highlighted our Nation's economic recovery and put a spotlight on the areas that needed the most improvement. The President highlighted the urgent need for better regulations of the payday lending industry—the very same day that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau unveiled proposals to rein in this loosely regulated industry.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting the CFPB's efforts to ensure that these products help—not harm—consumers. The payday lending and title loan industry must take steps to ensure that borrowers understand the loan terms and have the resources to pay them back.

In my district, the proliferation of payday lending is, really, unacceptable. On every corner, you will find a payday lender. In fact, the President quoted that there were more payday lending institutions in my district than there were McDonald's. These borrowers are disproportionately African American and Latino—two communities that were severely impacted by the predatory lending practices, and far too many of these borrowers find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt.

In the coming weeks, I plan to introduce a bill and to spearhead efforts, led by consumer industry groups, to protect consumers from predatory lending. I ask my colleagues to join me. These good people are my constituents and are not this industry's prey.

IN MEMORY OF MARY LARAE RICHTER

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in memory of Mary LaRae Richter.

Everybody knew her as "Rae" in the Chico, California, and northern California area. She was a truly inspiring woman who left a deep, lasting impact on her family, on the community of Chico, and on all who knew her. I knew her very well for quite a few years. She was a very, very sweet lady, indeed.

Born in 1932, at the height of the Great Depression, Rae was an exceptional student and a joyful daughter who was no stranger to hard work. Her first job was behind a soda fountain in a drug store in order to help support her family.

She married her husband, Bernie, in 1953 after they met in high school. Their marriage lasted for 46 years until

Bernie passed away. Of course, with Bernie's having been a political figure, including in the State legislature, she played a very supportive role in that endeavor, which was sometimes an arduous one, but she always had the right thing to say, including, "Oh, Bernard," when, maybe, things were getting a little out of control.

Bernie and Rae moved with their three children up to Chico in the 1960s. Rae poured her heart into her town and into her community and into her family-owned businesses while always making time to volunteer for the students just across the street at the Rosedale Elementary School. Rae fought valiantly with Parkinson's disease since 1998, and she displayed courage and joy even in that battle.

Being that supportive wife, a loving mom and grandmother, a joyful business manager, and a good friend to many, she will be greatly missed by all who knew her in northern California.

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ZELDIN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, when I was a boy, my father used to point out to me that there were certain moments, certain events, that not only defined, perhaps, a community or a generation but that left an indelible mark on a person. He referenced me to go speak to my grandparents about where they were when the news came that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I can remember my Grandfather Lucas describing the exact field, the exact row that he was picking cotton in in December of 1941 when one of the neighbors stopped and asked, "Have you heard?"

My father could tell you exactly the moment, while walking down the street in Elk City, Oklahoma, when he walked up on a crowd that was staring in the window of a store that was selling televisions. Everyone's mouth was down. Everyone was aghast at the news from Dallas.

In many ways, the experience of 2 minutes after 9 a.m. on April 19, 1995, has had the same mark and the same effect on not only me and on my colleagues in this delegation but on our communities in the country. Like my grandfather in his remembering the moment that he found out about Pearl Harbor and like my father in the moment he understood that President Kennedy had been assassinated, I will never forget sitting with the Oklahoma delegation, waiting to give testimony in a BRAC hearing in Dallas, when a reporter tapped me on the shoulder, a reporter I had known for some time.

He said: "We have a report that there has been an explosion at the Federal building in Oklahoma City. They say the building is gone. Your district office is in one of those Federal buildings

in downtown Oklahoma City. Which building are your people in?"

It is a moment that I will never forget.

The delegation got up, and, en masse, we rushed out into the lobby. There on the television monitors was the building that we recognized as the shell of the Murrah building. It, literally, was gone.

My folks were spared, but, on that day, 168 of our good fellow citizens in Oklahoma City were not. This Sunday morning, we will gather to remember that event of 20 years ago, an event that has changed us all forever.

I am proud of my fellow Oklahoma delegation here today because we still work just now as we did 20 years ago to address those issues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to one of my colleagues from Oklahoma, who was at that time the secretary of state for the State of Oklahoma, one of the folks in the inner circle in Governor Keating's administration as State government responded to something that no one could have expected.

Mr. COLE. I thank my friend for yielding, and I thank my friend for leading us in this genuinely somber and extraordinarily important moment not only for our State and, certainly, for what was then his district but, I think, for Americans everywhere.

Twenty years ago on April 19 of 1995, we saw a domestic tragedy of historic proportions. It is still the largest single act of domestic terrorism in American history. It was totally unexpected, totally unanticipated, and extraordinarily devastating to the people involved and, I think, to the country as a whole. But sometimes out of a tragedy of that proportion a triumph emerges, and that is certainly what occurred in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, and on the days that followed.

Our first thoughts on the 20th anniversary is always of the victims—of the 168 lives who were lost, 19 of them children, unknowing that disaster was about to overtake them—and of the many dozens who were wounded severely and who still, to this day, carry those injuries with them.

Next, we think always of the first responders, particularly of the Oklahoma City fire and police officers who immediately rushed to the scene; of the surrounding fire and police departments that were rapidly mobilized to assist them; of the Oklahoma National Guard, which was there within a matter of hours; and, frankly, of the rescue teams from all across the United States of America that immediately moved in our direction to help our people.

I think of the people of Oklahoma next, who, stunned, rallied with enormous speed and with great courage to try and support, in each and every way that they could, the folks whose lives had been lost and the people who were still in danger.

I still remember that day at the Governor's office—at the end of the day, at

2 o'clock in the morning—and driving from the capitol toward my home in Moore, Oklahoma, and seeing a line of people outside the blood center. At 2 in the morning, they were still there, wanting to help and be supportive in whatever way that they could. We were really blessed at that particular moment in the history of our State and in the history of our country with extraordinary leadership. I think, first, always—because I worked for Governor Keating as his secretary of state—of the manner in which he responded.

Like my friend Mr. LUCAS, I heard about this totally unexpectedly. I was, literally, walking into the capitol at 9:02, in the tunnel, and I felt a little shudder. When I walked into my office, my secretary immediately walked in and said, "Your wife is on the phone." She was working two blocks away from the site of the bombing, and she was on the 18th floor of a building.

She said, "I don't know what has happened, but I am looking down, and I can see enormous smoke—an explosion occurred—rolling out, and there are hundreds of people on the street, fleeing from this disaster."

My office was below the Governor's office on the first floor of the capitol, and I went up. This was maybe 8 minutes into the event. I walked in because I knew the Governor would be focused on this, obviously. He was standing in the press room immediately to the right as you walked in, and at that time, there were already helicopters in the air, and, on the scene, we were seeing the horrific sights.

The speculation immediately was that it was some sort of natural gas explosion. Well, Frank Keating, who was our Governor, was also a former FBI agent who had been trained in investigating terrorism in the 1960s. He was a former Tulsa prosecutor, a former U.S. attorney, a former Associate Attorney General of the United States, and he knew what he was looking at. He immediately looked at that television set, and I will never forget what he said.

He said: "That is not a natural gas explosion. That is a car bomb of some sort." He knew instantly what he was dealing with.

On that day and on the subsequent days, he led with extraordinary distinction in mobilizing resources, leading from the front, being on the front line. It was an exceptional act of public leadership from an official who was less than 100 days into his first term as Governor of the State.

Equally impressive was the leadership of his wife, our first lady, Cathy Keating. Most of America knows of the memorial service that took place on the Sunday after the disaster. I remember the night after the disaster my being at the Governor's Mansion. We still didn't know how many people had been lost, and we didn't know if there were survivors still in the building. There were search teams. We were dealing with a disaster of national and, really, international proportions.

Cathy Keating came to the meeting and said: "We need to have some sort of service to memorialize the people who have been lost. People are grieving, and they want to participate."

I remember thinking at the time, my goodness, how in the world can we ever pull this off? We are dealing with more than we can deal with, let alone organizing something like that, and I made that point. She said, "Don't worry. I will take over," and she did.

America, not just Oklahoma City and Oklahoma, was given a moment to mourn, a moment that attracted the President of the United States, Billy Graham, a national audience, and thousands of Oklahomans who simply wanted to get together and pay tribute to those who had lost their lives. It was an exceptional act of public leadership on her part. The two of them set up a foundation to take care of the educational needs of anyone who had lost a parent, let alone two parents, in the course of that, and that institution still functions to this day. Again, exceptional leadership.

We have had other moments of tragedy in our country, like 9/11, and just as Rudy Giuliani was quoted as being "America's mayor" on that day, Ron Norick in Oklahoma City was "America's mayor" that day. It was an amazing performance as he got together his police and his fire firefighters and was immediately on the scene. He is one of the greatest public servants who I have ever seen.

I would be remiss not to mention my friend behind me, Mr. LUCAS. As he alluded to in his remarks, that was his district office one building over. That was a place where he was in and out of a lot in the Federal building. My task as secretary of state, assigned by the Governor, was to work in Washington to try and coordinate with the Federal Government long-term rebuilding efforts.

□ 1300

Nobody did more to rebuild Oklahoma City than FRANK LUCAS. Nobody did more to help secure the funds, get the national support, work with us to get out of the requirements. We had to match this with 25 percent because this was not a natural disaster. This was literally an attack on a Federal facility in Oklahoma City with a unique Federal responsibility. Those were all things that FRANK LUCAS got done for not just the people of his district, but the people of our State; and, frankly, in that, he set some precedents that served the people of New York on 9/11 awfully well in addition.

The last person I want to mention is the President of the United States at the time. I am a pretty good Republican, and I can't say I ever voted for Bill Clinton, but I was very glad he was President of the United States at that moment. Nobody helped us more.

I will never forget 1 p.m. the day of the disaster. We had moved the Governor to a civil defense facility below

ground at the Capitol—he was directing affairs there—and we got a call from the President of the United States. I did not know it at the time, but they—Frank Keating and Bill Clinton—had actually gone to school together. They were both at Georgetown together. Frank Keating was president of the student body when Bill Clinton was president of the sophomore class, so they knew one another.

The first thing that the President asked was: Governor, do you have any idea who is responsible for this?

There were, of course, all sorts of wild reports on television, wild speculation.

The Governor, being a law enforcement professional, immediately responded: Mr. President, we have no idea. We do not know who would do this. I know you are hearing foreign terrorists or all sorts of things. We just don't know yet. It is too chaotic for us to know.

President Clinton at that point said something that really struck me, and struck me more later. He said: Well, I hope it wasn't a foreign national.

And I remember being almost shocked that you would hope that, you know, an American had done something this awful, but then he added, prophetically, as it turned out several years later: Because if it was, we will be at war someplace in the world within 6 months.

He was absolutely right. He, too, understood the dimensions of the tragedy. And in the days ahead, everything we asked for and all the resources and compassion that a great people like the United States of America and its citizens can muster was immediately at our disposal.

I remember President Clinton, when we announced we were doing the ceremony, we were discreetly approached by a member in his administration, who said: You know, the President would like to be here, but we certainly don't want to be here if it is inappropriate.

I said: Look, I have to go clear that with the Governor, but I can tell you, I know what Frank Keating's response is going to be. Of course, we would welcome the President of the United States.

He did, indeed, come. He not only helped us through it, he helped us emotionally through it, as did the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, at the time also made that journey and was there to help and comfort people.

So we may have our political differences from time to time as Americans, but in times of tragedy, we stick together. We come together; we pull together; and we work to help one another, and certainly President Clinton did that.

Finally, let me just make this observation and this expression of gratitude. I want to use this occasion to thank the millions and millions of Americans who responded with their prayers, with their help, the rescue workers that

came, the donations that flowed in from all across the country to help the victims and the families of the victims, that came, frankly, from around the world, because we had international help as well.

I want to remind people that whenever they lose faith in the United States of America or just the sheer decency of people, think of the Oklahoma City bombing; think of the magnificent performance of this country, not just of the people on the scene, but of the support this country directed toward its fellow citizens in a time of difficulty, and of the many prayers and expressions of goodwill and condolence from around the world as people rallied in the face of what was an unspeakable act of terror.

So we had our moment of tragedy, but we have had 20 years of triumph since then; and that triumph is not just the triumph of the people of Oklahoma City or the people of Oklahoma, it is an American triumph, and it is a human triumph of enormous dimensions and of great consequence.

Mr. LUCAS. Thank you, Congressman COLE.

I certainly want to acknowledge Congressman MULLIN and Congressman BRIDENSTINE. We work as a family delegation, so to speak, in the Oklahoma delegation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to Congressman RUSSELL, who has the responsibility of representing that site in the Fifth District of Oklahoma, to conclude with a few comments.

Congressman RUSSELL.

Mr. RUSSELL. I thank Congressman LUCAS and my friends and colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, on April 19, 1995, I was defending my country as an officer in the United States Army. We were preparing warriors to defend our country, never imagining that an attack would occur in our hometown.

Among the 168 people that were killed and the 680 nonfatal injuries, the 324 buildings that were destroyed or damaged in a 16-block radius, and the \$652 million worth of damage that was caused in my hometown, there were a number of brother warriors and sister warriors that were defending their country at their duty stations at the recruiting depots that were contained in the Federal building—Victoria Sohn, a master sergeant in the United States Army; Benjamin Davis, a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps; Lakesha Levy, an airman first class in the United States Air Force; Randolph Guzman, a captain in the United States Marine Corps; Cartney McRaven, an airman first class in the United States Air Force; and Lola Bolden, a sergeant first class in the United States Army—never imagining that in their recruiting duties in Oklahoma City that they would give their lives in defense of their country.

To my colleagues and to Congressman LUCAS, I would ask that we could observe a moment of silence in mem-

ory to all the 168 Americans, Oklahomans, friends that were killed in this despicable act of terror on our domestic shores, and to all of those that carry the scars and injuries to this day, if we could observe a brief moment of silence.

I thank my colleague and friend, Congressman LUCAS, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, there is no way that the Oklahoma delegation can express our thanks to the country for the help over the last 20 years, but with this moment of silence just now, we ask that everyone, 2 minutes after 9, central time, this Sunday morning think about those 168 souls, those killed and those who survived, and those who were changed forever.

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

HONORING ALEX MILLS WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Americans from across the Nation were driven by a sudden sense of patriotism, and they sought ways that they could serve their country. One such patriotic American was young Alex Mills of Concord, North Carolina. Although Alex desperately wanted to serve his nation, at only 13 years old, he was too young to join the ranks of thousands of young men and women who were shipping off overseas.

Determined to not allow his youth to stand between him and doing something significant, young Alex searched for a way that he could help his country. Now, learning of a newly organized outfit created to patrol the coastline and borders of our homeland, Alex quickly enlisted in the Civil Air Patrol.

Throughout World War II, the Civil Air Patrol pilots flew hundreds of patrol missions searching for enemy submarines operating along our coastline. Throughout the war, the Civil Air Patrol spotted numerous German U-boats, and after the planes were fitted with bombs, the Civil Air Patrol crews were credited with sinking at least two enemy submarines. Recognizing the value of this volunteer force of civilians, Congress acted to make the Civil Air Patrol the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force.

Forty-one years after first joining the Civil Air Patrol, Alex Mills was appointed as the chaplain of Civil Air Patrol's Rome Composite Squadron at the Richard B. Russell Airfield in Rome, Georgia.

Since taking on the role of chaplain, Alex Mills has continued his exemplary service and has risen to the rank of