

and individuals for their many contributions to our region's economic success and quality of life. Their contributions are among the many reasons why Fairfax County is one of the best places in the country in which to live, work, and raise a family. I commend them on their awards and wish them great success in all future endeavors.

BCER GROUP

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud the BCER Group for receiving the Colorado Companies to Watch Award, an awards program honoring second-stage companies for the important role they play in Colorado's economy and entrepreneurial community.

The BCER Group is a consulting engineering firm which provides creative and state-of-the-art mechanical, electrical, fire protection, life safety, and technology engineering services for commercial, institutional, industrial, and government projects nationwide. Founded in 1994, the BCER Group has grown to three offices and 88 employees. Today they are known for their ability to make quick decisions, take necessary risks, and evolve with the ever-changing industry in order to provide growth opportunities for their employees, clients and community.

The BCER Group was founded on several guiding principles such as fostering a fun, friendly company environment while still focusing on the serious nature of its work. This founding principle as well as its leadership and commitment to the community remain at the heart of BCER's culture. The company supports a variety of charitable organizations including the Santa House, The Salvation Army, Caruso Charities, Whiz Kids Tutoring Program, and the Children's Hospital Burn Camp.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the BCER Group for this well-deserved recognition by Colorado Companies to Watch and wish them continued success.

IN HONOR OF THE RETIREMENT
OF JIM MILLER

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jim Miller on the occasion of his retirement as Federal Liaison for the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System.

For well over fifteen years, Jim diligently worked as an advocate for Ohio's public pension system. By utilizing his unique knowledge and experience, Jim proved himself to be a remarkable asset to both Ohio's public employees and elected officials.

It has been said that Jim has never met a stranger. His quick wit, comfort with people and passion for his work played a large role in his tremendous success. Whether he was speaking with the most senior member of Congress or a junior staff member, Jim was

able to relate and connect with them. This candor allowed parties to come together in an effort to garner meaningful results for beneficiaries and taxpayers alike.

As Jim transitions to his next stage in life, his knowledge and guidance will truly be missed, yet few are more deserving of a peaceful and relaxing retirement. On behalf of Ohio's 12th Congressional District, I would like to thank Jim Miller for his many years of service and wish him a happy retirement.

HONORING COLONEL SONG LENG
XIONG

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Colonel Song Leng Xiong. Colonel Song Leng Xiong passed away peacefully in the presence of his loved ones on September 28, 2016 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 14, 2017 would have been his 78th birthday.

Colonel Song Leng Xiong was born in 1939 in the village of Ban Xoun, Mouang Ped, in the Xieng Khouang Province in Laos. He began his distinguished military career at the age of just 14, when he enlisted in the French Army and was selected to attend training in South Vietnam, serving as a radio operator from 1953 to 1954. From 1956 to 1960, he was assigned a battalion to guard Route 7 in Muang Xoun, and later led the building of the Phou Vieng airfield in his home province.

After being specially selected to further his training in Thailand, in June of 1960, Colonel Song Leng Xiong was tasked with selecting nearly 600 new recruits to receive special training as part of the United States Central Intelligence Agency's Special Guerilla Units. Through this program, the CIA recruited thousands of Hmong soldiers and military leaders like Colonel Song Leng Xiong to fight against the Communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese Army regulars in Laos, working as surrogate soldiers of the United States Armed Forces. As many as 100,000 Hmong were recruited and trained to serve as these secret warriors, bravely battling the North Vietnamese Army for our country's cause.

Colonel Song Leng Xiong fought in many battles for our country. In addition to leading his own battalion, he personally rescued and retrieved over seven American pilots who were shot down over Laos. His is one of countless stories of Hmong service-members and military leaders who protected our country through conducting guerrilla actions, guarding key installations, gathering intelligence, and undertaking rescue missions—all in the name of freedom.

While the Secret War in Laos ended in 1975, Colonel Song Leng Xiong's service to his people and our country did not. Many refugees of the Secret War sought a better life here in the United States. Colonel Song Leng Xiong, a refugee himself, chose to stay behind and continue helping his fellow refugees in the transition. He immigrated to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1993 after the United Nations closed the Ban Vinai refugee camp. In Minneapolis, Colonel Song Leng Xiong became a leader in our community through his service as Chair of

the Lao-Hmong American Coalition chapter of Minnesota. In this role, he and his wife, Manichan Xiong, worked to share the stories of their community so that all Americans never forget their sacrifice.

I am honored to recognize my constituent Colonel Song Leng Xiong for his tremendous sacrifices on behalf of our country. We are all better off due to his life of service. His dedication to freedom and to this country will never be forgotten. Thank you, Colonel Song Leng Xiong, for protecting our country with such great distinction, and for the legacy you leave of continuing the fight for freedom.

TRIBUTE TO THE 187TH AIR
NATIONAL GUARD FIGHTER WING

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, Alabama is a state rich with tradition and legacies of excellence. Yet, one that stands out is the legacy of military excellence exhibited by the 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing, located at Dannelly Field in Montgomery, Alabama.

The 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing has an unparalleled legacy of excellence worthy of praise and worth protecting for the future. Currently, the guard unit is a prime candidate to fly the new F-35A Lightning II fighter jets, known as the Joint Strike Fighter. The 187th currently flies the oldest F-16s in the U.S. Air Force's inventory; however, it is among eighteen Air National Guard units competing for the coveted new aircraft.

The Alabama delegation in Congress is unanimous and steadfast in our support of the 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing winning this new assignment. Nothing helps us make the case more than the long history of outstanding military service that has been the proud legacy of the 187th.

The 187th Fighter Wing has a proven combat track record and an unparalleled military heritage. It is home to the 100th Fighter Squadron—the famed "Red Tails." This squadron's lineage traces back to World War II and the renowned Tuskegee Airmen, America's first black military pilots and support personnel.

The 187th benefits from being a key strategic resource—only five miles from Maxwell Air Force Base, and twenty-five minutes flying time from Eglin, Tyndall, Hurlburt, and Moody Air Force Bases. This presents numerous opportunities for joint air-to-air and air-to-ground training. F-35 pilots of the 187th may also utilize the electronic ranges on Eglin AFB. This is all contingent, however, on the unit being outfitted with the new fighter jets. During my tenure in office, I have been and will continue to be a stalwart advocate for this vital national resource located in my district.

As a Member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I have a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities that confront our nation. I am also keenly aware that the world we live in is filled with potential threats that are constantly developing and changing. We have to remain ever vigilant and be prepared to not only confront ongoing threats but those emerging as well. A

major key to our success requires that we maintain air-superiority and provide effective air-cover for our men and women deployed in combat zones. This is the defining legacy of the 187th from World War II to today.

Given its rich history and superior service to this nation, the 187th Air National Guard Fighter Wing stands poised and well-equipped to bring the next generation of air power to the Alabama Air National Guard.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE PURSUIT
OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Yogesh Varhade and his pursuit of social justice. His hero, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, died 60 years ago today. Ambedkar inspired the Dalit Buddhist Movement in India, campaigned against social discrimination of the Dalit caste, supported the rights of women and laborers, and was appointed first Minister of Law and Justice in India in 1947.

In honor of Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Varhade founded the Ambedkar Center for Justice and Peace, a non-governmental organization, which has a headquarters in Kingston, PA. For the last 25 years Mr. Varhade dedicated himself to addressing issues of child labor, bonded labor, prostitution, human trafficking, and caste-based discrimination as they occur in India by implementing a legal literacy program for the marginalized in India and by educating others at the United Nations as well as elected leaders like myself.

We in the United States struggle with versions of these ugly truths born from hate and intolerance. Forced labor and human trafficking are a \$150 billion industry worldwide. This nation has done much to pursue diplomatic solutions to these international issues. We must rededicate ourselves to this work and to our many partners in honor of the heroes who led the way.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOSE
ABEYTA

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jose Abeyta of Montrose, Colorado, who passed away on November 14, 2016. Jose is survived by his wife, Loretta, whom he was married to for 40 years, and their two sons, Lenny and Juan. Jose was a personal friend of mine and a beloved member of his community. He served our country proudly during the Vietnam War from 1969–1971 as a fixed wing mechanic for the Army's 358th Aviation Detachment. He received an honorable discharge after serving for two years.

Mr. Abeyta is a hero because of the time he spent in the Army, but the life he lived after his service showed us what an honorable man and model citizen he truly was. Jose married Loretta one month after returning home from

Vietnam, and they moved to Colorado Springs, where he went to school and earned a degree in Sociology at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Mr. Abeyta paid his own way through school, and then he and Loretta moved back to Montrose, where he began his career as a probation officer. He later ran successfully for city council in 2006. He served as the Mayor of Montrose in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, it was not just his work that defined who Mr. Abeyta was, but also his devotion to serving others. As a husband, father, war veteran, little league coach, and public servant, he lived a life full of selfless service and stood as an example for all Americans to live by. He started out as the new guy in Montrose, and he ended up serving as the Mayor, which speaks volumes about the impact he had on the community. I am saddened by Mr. Abeyta's death, because he is an irreplaceable figure in Montrose, but I am grateful that I had the opportunity to know him. His family is in my thoughts and prayers, and I hope the community of Montrose will continue to celebrate his tremendous accomplishments in the weeks and months to come.

TO COMMEND THE HONOREES OF
THE 2016 KOREAN AMERICAN AS-
SOCIATION OF GREATER WASH-
INGTON COMMUNITY APPRECI-
ATION NIGHT

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the extraordinary honorees who will be recognized during the 3rd Annual Community Appreciation Night celebration sponsored by the Korean American Association of Greater Washington (KAAW.) Although this is the 3rd Community Appreciation Night, it is the first in which individuals will be recognized for their public service.

The KAAW strives to inform and engage the Korean American community throughout our region. Through its efforts and the efforts of its President, So Jung Lim, the organization continues to grow and successfully empower Korean Americans to become fully engaged participants in our local community and political process. Northern Virginia is blessed by its diversity—in fact, it is home to one of the largest concentrations of Americans of Korean ancestry in the entire country. As the Member of Congress for the 11th District of Virginia and the co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea, I am proud to have partnered with the Korean community on numerous issues, going back to my time as a Member and later Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The KAAW has been a constant and invaluable partner in these efforts.

Public service is a core value of our society. Each of us has the ability and responsibility to contribute what we can in order to make our communities better. Whether it is volunteering at a local school, in a community or civic association, at a food bank or other charity, or serving in elected office, the efforts of public servants and community activists enrich us all. This is especially true for first responders and educators. They dedicate their lives to our

children, our safety, and our future. KAAW has embraced this ethos and tonight will honor five first responders and two educators who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

It is my great honor to include the names of the following individuals in recognition of their extraordinary achievements:

Officer Nicole Ha, Washington Metropolitan Police Department, Special Liaison Division—Asian Liaison Unit.

Dr. Shelly O'Foran, English Department Chair, Freedom High School.

Police Officer First Class Hyun Chang, Fairfax County Police Department.

Master Deputy Charles Gravatte, Loudoun County Sheriff Office.

Firefighter Andrew Gode, Loudoun County Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management.

Alex Morrison, Orchestra Teacher, Centreville High School.

Officer Jeong Hong, Fairfax County Police Department.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending these fine men and women and congratulate each of them on being honored by KAAW. I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to KAAW for sponsoring this event and providing the opportunity for us to express our respect and appreciation to each of the honorees.

HONORING MRS. GERTRUDE R.
GRENADA

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Gertrude R. Grenada who was born and educated in the Mt. Olive Community in Bolton, Mississippi.

Mrs. Grenada was one of 10 children who knew too well how important it was to achieve an education. She furthered her education by attending Jackson State College (University). Mrs. Grenada holds a B.S. Degree in Early Childhood Education along with 23 hours of study toward her Master's Degree. She was first employed with the Hinds County Headstart Agency in 1966 as a Social Worker.

Mrs. Grenada served 37 years of employment with the Hinds County Headstart Agency. She touched the lives of more than 4 thousand children in the Bolton, Edwards and Jackson communities. What she enjoyed the most was working closely with the children, being surrounded and respected by fellow co-workers and employers with the highest levels of intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Gertrude R. Grenada.

PROVIDING CARE TO THE
DUCHENNE COMMUNITY

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recall the significance of the authority extended by Congress to the Food and Drug