

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH
ANNIVERSARY OF VOICE-BUFFALO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of VOICE-Buffalo, a faith-based community of urban and suburban congregations throughout the County of Erie that has more than exceeded its mission to be the “Voice of the Voiceless.”

In 1996 VOICE-Buffalo Clergy identified congregation-based organization as the strategy for breaking down the barriers that divide neighborhoods, our city and region. Tirelessly dedicated to creating a culture of responsibility and accountability for what happens in our community, VOICE-Buffalo continues to build the capacity of people to act on their concerns and to strengthen and connect institutions to individuals.

Today, 55 interfaith and diverse congregations, unions and other community organizations that share common values, focus on bringing local issues that profoundly impact the lives of residents to the forefront. VOICE-Buffalo members believe in the positive progress that can be achieved through rallying local leaders, congregations and the private sector together to hold those in power accountable for making decisions that are in the best interest of the community.

For two decades, VOICE’s mission has taken root in those committed to the cause of social and economic justice and whose training enhances engagement in the public life of their congregations and communities. This committed membership acts locally to connect people, build public relationships, address issues in their church neighborhoods and has built a regional organization with the capacity to address policies that impact individuals, families and communities.

Committed to long term systemic change, VOICE-Buffalo has achieved tangible and transformative success with its push to increase health and public safety with the development of a city-wide uniform garbage tote system, the implementation of Project Holy Ground to strengthen congregations, engage and connect people to the community and bring stability to neighborhoods. In 2004, VOICE-Buffalo called for targeted demolition of unsafe properties that led to collaboration with the city of Buffalo to develop a user friendly manual on housing inspections and procedures.

Recent successes have been made in public transportation and in bringing methods of Restorative Justice to Erie County. Voice sponsorship has boosted training for more than 50 “peace circle keepers” and the establishment of faith-based peace center “hubs.”

In March of this year, I had the privilege of working with VOICE-Buffalo, NOAH (Niagara Organizing Alliance for Hope) and its joint federation, Gamaliel WNY (Western New York) in welcoming U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez back to his hometown of Buffalo, New York. Secretary Perez accepted the invitation extended by VOICE-Buffalo President Pastor James Giles, NOAH President Rev. JoAnne Scott and Paul Vukelic, CEO of Try-It Distrib-

uting, for a public dialogue on workforce diversity and training strategies.

Secretary Perez addressed a packed auditorium at Bennett High School outlining the Federal Government’s plan to provide resources to fill the existing gaps by connecting people in need to the pipeline of opportunity and employment. The challenge to develop innovative approaches has been embraced by VOICE-Buffalo and its community partners who continue to use their expertise to identify the underlying issues that prevent hiring and advocate for sustainability measures.

There is well-deserved national acclaim for Buffalo’s renaissance but the true measure of success will be when all residents are able to participate in the rebuilding of Western New York. VOICE-Buffalo has accepted that challenge and is leading the way to ensure that a pathway to participation is in place and that it is sustainable.

The process of creating positive social change is never easy; it takes courage, faith, patience and vision. And that is why I rise today in the House of Representatives to acknowledge with admiration and appreciation the courage, faith, patience and vision of VOICE-Buffalo. More than 400 others joined together in the Golden Ballroom of Statler City to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of VOICE-Buffalo on June 2, 2016 and to give thanks for the contributions of Father Harry Grace, Rev. Will Brown (posthumously), Marianne Rathman, Murray Holman, Robert Spicer and Amy Vossen Vukelic.

Thank you for this opportunity to congratulate VOICE-Buffalo for its accomplishments. I would like to extend my best wishes for continued success. By standing together, we can “be the people we’ve been waiting for” that make a difference in our community and set “Our Path to Power.”

HONORING JIMMY SMITH

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with Representative MIKE THOMPSON in memory of our friend, Jimmy Smith, who passed away on May 24, 2016, at the age of 67. A third generation Humboldt County native, Jimmy was woven into the fabric of California’s North Coast as a commercial fisherman, avid outdoorsman, dedicated public servant, and community leader.

Born in Eureka on July 11, 1948, to James L. Smith and Jean Withey, Jimmy graduated from Eureka High in 1966. In 1972, Jimmy bought a salmon and crab fishing boat, which he operated out of Humboldt Bay for 30 years. He became a respected and expert fisherman known for his uncanny ability to locate salmon. Jimmy was also a lifelong hunter with a passion for ducks and geese, especially black brant.

During his time as a commercial fisherman, Jimmy also volunteered and worked on numerous fisheries and wildlife surveys throughout the area with the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish & Game, California Waterfowl Association, and

Humboldt Fish Action Council. He co-chaired the Task Force for the Humboldt Bay Management Plan, served as the fishing industry representative to the Klamath River Basin Fisheries Technical Work Group, and was appointed by Interior Secretary Babbitt to the Trinity Task Force.

In 1995, Jimmy was elected to the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District and served until 2000, where he worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to deepen Humboldt Bay to improve safety and accommodate deep-draft ships. Jimmy was then elected to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in 2000, a position he served in for 12 years. His achievements, which he always credited to those he worked with, are too many to record. Among them were working tirelessly to clean up the South Spit of Humboldt Bay—now the Mike Thompson Wildlife Area; helping broker agreements meant to tear out the Klamath River’s fish-blocking dams; and efforts to improve flows on the Eel River and protect fisheries on the Klamath, Trinity and Eel rivers. During his term as supervisor, Jimmy was a primary visionary and co-founder of the seven-county North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (now the North Coast Resource Partnership) and the Five-Counties Salmonid Conservation Program.

Jimmy was named National Fisherman Magazine Highliner of the Year in 1983 and received numerous other recognitions, including the John Pelnar Commercial Fisherman Award in 1984 and awards from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, California Waterfowl Association, U.S. Coast Guard, Eureka Chamber of Commerce, Elks Club, and the Humboldt County League of Women Voters. He was a member and the chair of the Commercial Salmon Trollers Advisory Committee and California Salmon Stamp Committee.

Jimmy Smith was a champion of the North Coast and the conservation of its natural resources. He had a profound impact on so many people, often serving as a valued friend, partner, and mentor. He quietly led by example and earned his reputation as a true gentleman known for creating partnerships, responsive leadership, treating everyone with respect, generosity of spirit, kindness, and integrity. Those who knew him best appreciated his witty sense of humor and love for teasing those he liked.

Jimmy is survived by his soul mate and wife of more than 40 years, Jacque; his son Gary; his granddaughters Shawni Chrislock and her husband Kohl, and McKayla Smith; his sisters Laurie Smith and Marnie Carr; and nieces, nephews and cousins. He also leaves behind many friends who loved him and will miss him dearly.

Few are as beloved and widely respected as Jimmy Smith, who made such a difference in the lives of so many and in his community. We both considered him a friend and relied on him for his wise counsel, as did our staffs and our colleagues in state and local government. Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we honor Jimmy today for his decades of commitment to the North Coast, and we express our deepest appreciation for his friendship and service. His presence will be sorely missed and his legacy not soon forgotten.

HONORING DIRECTOR ELIZABETH
JOYCE FREEMAN

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with Congressman MCNERNEY and Congressman SWALWELL to acknowledge and honor Director Elizabeth Joyce Freeman for her many years of service to the Palo Alto Veteran Affairs health care system. Director Freeman has worked nobly in serving veterans since 1983, and after 33 years of honorable service to the VA she has announced her retirement on June 7, 2016.

Graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1983, Ms. Freeman obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. She returned to school in 1987 at Louisiana Tech University where she graduated with her Master's Degree in Business Administration.

In 1983, Ms. Freeman's began her extensive career with the VA as a Resident Engineer at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City. She moved up the ranks quickly and became the Senior Resident Engineer in Oklahoma City and later moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. Other positions she held with the VA include the following: Project Manager of the VA Central Office Southern Region; Health System Administrator Trainee of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System; Chief Operating Officer of the VA Sierra Pacific Network Office in San Francisco, California; Associate Director of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System; and Director of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

In 2001, Ms. Freeman was appointed to Director of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System, and since then has efficiently and successfully overseen the complex organization. In her capacity as Director she is tasked with overseeing an annual budget of over \$1 billion, a capital portfolio of \$2.6 billion, and more than 7,000 staff and volunteers.

In addition to Ms. Freeman's numerous professional achievements, we would like to highlight some of the work that Ms. Freeman did outside the VA Office. She served on many boards and committees, such as the Palo Alto Veterans Institute for Research and the Quality Board, Patient Care, and Patient Experience Committee of the El Camino Hospital Board. She was a member of the California Hospital Association's Santa Clara County Section, and served on the Board of Directors for the Hospital Council in 2006. She should be commended for her outstanding involvement in the community.

The abundance of awards Ms. Freeman has received demonstrates her exceptional leadership and proven work ethic. Ms. Freeman received the Presidential Rank Award at the meritorious level in 2005 and the distinguished level in 2009, she was a recipient of the Leadership VA Senior Executive Leadership Award, she received the VA Alumni Association's Honorary Leadership Award in 2005, and was named one of the top 100 influential women in Silicon Valley.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing Director Elizabeth Freeman's leadership that brought invaluable institutional knowledge to the VA Palo Alto Health Care

System. We thank her for her unwavering leadership, devoted service and contributions on behalf of the community and the Nation.

TRIBUTE TO EAGLE SCOUT BRYCE
NORMAN BERTHUSEN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bryce Norman Berthusen of Wauke, Iowa for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. Bryce is a member of Boy Scout Troop 178. The Eagle Scout designation is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Approximately two percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well maintained over the past century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Scout Project to benefit the community. For Bryce's project, he designed and constructed outdoor fitness stations at the local Wauke Y.M.C.A. Bryce is a freshman at Wauke High School with a great interest in science, engineering and music. He is also on the Wauke High School baseball team and spends time with his church's youth group.

The work ethic Bryce has shown in his Eagle Scout Project and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank, speaks volumes about his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family and community demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent Bryce Norman Berthusen and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives will join me in congratulating him on obtaining the Eagle Scout ranking, and I wish him continued success in his future education and career.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH AN-
NIVERSARY OF THE FELLOW-
SHIP CHAPEL

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Fellowship Chapel on their 50th anniversary. The accomplishments of this long-standing institution exemplify the importance and strength of community, fellowship, and service.

Founded in 1966 by Reverend James E. Wadsworth Jr. and around one-hundred founding members, Fellowship Chapel came from humble beginnings at a small funeral home. Through tireless service, its membership and ministries have continued to grow, making it necessary to repeatedly expand. In January of 2002, members and friends of Fel-

lowship Chapel fulfilled Reverend Dr. Wendell Anthony's vision of a new village with the historic groundbreaking for the present church building on West Outer Drive. The building was dedicated on June 5th, 2005, as thousands marched from the old location to the new, demonstrating the significance of Fellowship Chapel within the community.

Fellowship Chapel has a strong and growing congregation built on a foundation of faith and trust which has been built through the years under the visionary leadership of Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony. Along with faithfully leading his congregation, Reverend Anthony is a powerful voice for positive change in Metro Detroit. As the President of the Detroit Branch NAACP, Reverend Anthony has led the fight for civil rights, good jobs, and safe communities in Detroit. As Reverend Anthony has fought hard for social change, Fellowship Chapel has become a place where members of the community gather to discuss the important issues whether they are on a local, state, or national level, to ensure members of the community have a better understanding of what is happening and how to engage to make our world a better place. In that way, Fellowship Chapel is a powerful symbol for what we believe and what we should strive for as a people.

Fellowship Chapel's leaders and volunteers have continued to faithfully provide much-needed services to the local community, including full-time outreach ministry programs, computer programming, adult education, Narcotics and Alcoholics anonymous, homeless assistance, and standardized test-coaching for college-bound students. For 50 years, Fellowship Chapel has held itself to the highest standards to ensure that local residents would always have somewhere to turn during both good times and bad. As a sanctuary of spiritual and social progress, it has served as a pillar of the local community for half a century, and will continue to do so for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today to honor Fellowship Chapel on their 50th anniversary and wish them many more years of success.

MARIYA PEREZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Mariya Perez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Mariya Perez is a 12th grader at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Mariya Perez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Mariya Perez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.