

Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, after 8 years, this will be my last floor speech as the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Congress. I want to thank my constituents for giving me the opportunity to serve as their voice in Washington. They are enduring difficult times, but they never lose their hope, dignity, or appreciation for life's blessings.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the House and the Senate. I respect your dedication to public service, energy, and commitment to the causes you champion. In addition, I want to thank my staff, which has served me and the people of Puerto Rico with skill, passion, and loyalty.

Most importantly, I want to thank my wife, Maria-Elena; my four children; and the rest of my family. They have walked alongside me on this journey through the peaks and valleys, and my love for them cannot be captured with words.

It is impossible to condense 8 action-packed years into 5 minutes. However, if there is a central theme to my tenure as Resident Commissioner, it has been "fighting the good fight" on behalf of the 3.4 million American citizens in Puerto Rico, who have been treated unfairly for too long.

In an example of baptism by fire, the battle began almost as soon as I assumed office in 2009, when Congress was debating the stimulus bill known as ARRA. Even as I was still learning to navigate my way through the Capitol, we managed to secure virtually State-like treatment for Puerto Rico, injecting almost \$7 billion into the island's economy when we needed it most.

The fight continued the following year with the Affordable Care Act, which resulted in the largest funding increase in history for Puerto Rico's Medicaid program. Separately, we secured legislative and administrative action that eliminated many of the disparities that Puerto Rico faced under the Medicare program.

I am also proud of our work to combat drug-related violence in Puerto Rico, requiring the Federal Government to prepare the Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy and persuading Federal lawsuit agencies to increase their resources in Puerto Rico. The number of homicides on the island was cut in half between 2011 and 2015. But this is not about statistics. It is about preserving human life.

Moreover, I have tried my best to serve those who have served us. Residents of Puerto Rico have a rich military tradition, and no unit exemplifies their courage and character better than the 65th Infantry Regiment, which fought the enemy on the battlefield and discrimination in the barracks. After we enacted legislation to award them the Congressional Gold Medal, these warriors—now in the twilight of their lives—stood beside Presi-

dent Obama as he signed the bill into law and were honored at a ceremony in the Capitol, one that I will never forget.

The toughest fight of my tenure came earlier this year when Congress and the White House worked together to enact legislation, called PROMESA, to prevent the Government of Puerto Rico from collapsing. Nobody was pleased that such legislation was necessary, and nobody liked every provision in the bill, but I firmly believe that PROMESA, if properly implemented, provides a path to a better future for Puerto Rico.

I close with this thought: Puerto Rico's current territory status, which gives Congress license to treat my constituents like second class citizens, is undignified and unsustainable.

Following a 2012 local referendum in which island residents expressed their opposition to the current status and their support for statehood, Congress enacted legislation that provided funding for the first federally sponsored referendum in Puerto Rico's history. The significance of this achievement has yet to be sufficiently appreciated. Puerto Rico should use this authority to conduct a vote on whether the territories should become a State. If the people of Puerto Rico ratify their support for statehood, as I expect they will, it will be incumbent upon Congress to implement that result. This country, which was founded on the principles of equality and justice, must live up to its creed.

May God bless Puerto Rico and the United States of America.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOSE ABEYTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TIPTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Jose Abeyta of Montrose, Colorado, who passed away on November 14, 2016. Jose is survived by his wife, Loretta, whom he married 40 years ago, and they have two sons, Lenny and Juan.

Jose was a personal friend of mine and was a beloved member of his community. He served our country proudly during the Vietnam war from 1969 to 1971, as a fixed wing mechanic for the Army's 358th Aviation Detachment. He received an honorable discharge after serving for 2 years. Mr. Abeyta was a hero for 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 1 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. He and Loretta then moved back to Montrose, where he began his career as a probation officer. He later ran suc-

cessfully for the city council in 2006 and served as the mayor of Montrose in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, it was not just his work that defined who Mr. Abeyta was. It was the devotion to serving others. As a husband, a father, a war veteran, a little league coach, and a 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 his community.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by Jose's passing because he was 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 that the community of Montrose will continue to celebrate his tremendous accomplishments in the weeks and months to come. Jose Abeyta will be missed.

#### END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving, back in Massachusetts, I participated in the seventh annual Monte's March, which is a 43-mile walk to raise awareness about hunger in our community and to raise money for The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

The leader of this remarkable event is Monte Belmonte, a well-known local radio personality with WRSI, the River, and a committed activist on behalf of those who are most vulnerable. This year, the march raised a record \$211,213. This translates into over a half a million meals for individuals and families who struggle with food insecurity. I was impressed by the stamina of all of those who walked and by the incredible generosity of the community.

The sad reality is that there is no congressional district in the United States that is hunger free, and those who battle hunger defy stereotypes. Some are homeless; some are jobless; but there are many who work but who earn so little that they can't afford to put food on the table on a regular basis for their families.

While food banks and food pantries and charitable organizations are vital in our efforts to combat hunger, they cannot do it alone. We need a strong commitment by our government to do its part. Indeed, I would argue that we have fallen way short of doing what is needed to ensure that no one goes hungry. Those whom I marched alongside during Monte's March are good people who understand what it means to truly be part of a community.

I want to thank, first and foremost, the incredible Monte Belmonte and all of the people at the River, including Mark Lattanzi, Joan Holliday, Michael Sokol, Kaliis Smith, Dave Musante,

and Matt Peterson. They are amazing people who worked overtime to make this march a success.

I am grateful to Andrew Morehouse, the executive director of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and to everyone at the food bank. They do incredible work.

Thanks to all of the elected officials who joined part of the march, including my colleagues, Congressmen RICHIE NEAL and JOE KENNEDY. We were also joined by State Representatives Steve Kulik and Aaron Vega, State Representative-elect Solomon Goldstein-Rose, as well as by Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz and District Attorney Dave Sullivan.

We kicked off the march at Friends of the Homeless in Springfield, and I am grateful for all that they do. The Sheriff's Departments in Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties, as well as the Deerfield Police, helped provide escorts for us during all 43 miles.

A special thanks to the students who joined the march from Greenfield Center School, HEC Academy, Conway Grammar School, and Erving Elementary. We were joined by a contingent from Greenfield Community College, which included its president, Bob Pura. We also had a group of farmers from The Kitchen Garden in Sunderland who joined the effort.

Sean Barry, from Four Seasons Liquors in Hadley, was, as usual, Monte's right-hand man and always at the front of the line. We had a large group of individuals who marched and raised a lot of money. Thanks to all of them. My friend Chia Collins of Northampton deserves special credit for raising the most.

Thanks to all of the people who greeted us along the way, including Karen Blanchard of Kate's Kitchen, Andrea Marion at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen and Pantry, Mindy Domb at the Amherst Survival Center, Lori Divine and Vitek Kruta at Gateway City Arts, Chancellor Subbaswamy at UMass Amherst and his top aide Natalie Blais, who marched 27 miles with us.

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We are grateful to Northampton Brewery for a wonderful dinner on Monday, Chandler's in Deerfield for a great lunch on Tuesday, Richardson's Candy Kitchen in Deerfield for the indulgent chocolates that gave us energy, and all the folks at Seymour's in Greenfield for the magnificent celebration at the end of the march. Also, a special thanks to Tea Guys for their wonderful tea in honor of the march and for their generosity.

Thanks to Ben Clark from Clarkdale Fruit Farm in Deerfield for the apples and for keeping us in line. Thanks to Erika Connell Cooper's mother for the delicious apple pies. And thank you to Mr. Michael Brooks and the students at the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton for

making the shopping carts we used during the march.

Mr. Speaker, I was glad to be part of this, but I want to close by expressing my deep concern about the future. I remain worried about rumors of more cuts to SNAP or separating SNAP from the farm bill or weakening child nutrition. With so many relying on these programs to help put food on the table, these cuts would be devastating for families across the country. We must protect and strengthen these programs.

I believe food ought to be a right for every single individual in this country and on the planet, but the sad reality is that it isn't. All of us need to do better. All of us need to care more. All of us need to recognize our moral failings in not addressing this issue sooner.

So on behalf of the dedicated crew that took part in Monte's March, I urge all of us in Congress to act and end hunger now.

#### IN HONOR OF DAVID HOWLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Howle.

For the past 29 years, Coach Howle has served as the head football coach for the Bunn High School Wildcats in Franklin County. During that time, Coach Howle had unprecedented success, amassing 214 wins and just 90 losses. He has had 45 players go on to play at the collegiate level, a nearly unheard of number for an AA high school.

While Coach Howle built the Bunn football program into a regional powerhouse, it is more important to recognize the impact he has had on thousands of students, parents, and staff in the Bunn community. His expectation of his players to work hard, not just on the field, Mr. Speaker, but also in the classroom, translated into a 99 percent graduation rate for his student athletes.

Coach Howle has famously told his team, "show me your friends and I'll show you your future," encouraging his players not just to be good citizens, but also to be productive members of society.

And no matter the outcome of any game—win, loss, or draw—Coach Howle was always there to encourage his players to keep their heads up and to look to the future as the team ended every game with the Bunn High School fight song followed by the Lord's prayer.

David Howle exemplifies what the thousands of dedicated educators in North Carolina do every day. The lessons Coach Howle taught and the difference he made in thousands of lives will be remembered in his community for years to come.

#### FAREWELL ADDRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House one last time as a Member of Congress. Over 18 years ago, I was honored and humbled to be elected to this House. It has been the job and the responsibility of a lifetime.

After a career spent as a nurse and in our public schools as a school nurse, it was the start of a life I never expected, but I was eager to answer the call to public service on behalf of the citizens of the central coast of California. It was the same call that had beckoned my husband, Walter, before me. He was a religious studies professor who felt compelled to serve. Like Walter, I sought to help restore the bonds of trust between the people and their government.

While the circumstances of my joining Congress were unexpected, it has been a tremendous honor to serve with all of you over these years. Together with our colleagues, our dedicated staff, and our constituents, I have been proud to work on behalf of issues so important to our congressional district on the central coast of California, issues important also to our entire Nation.

We have worked hard to ensure that everyone has the chance to fulfill their American Dream, while moving our economy and our country forward. We have fought to protect women's rights, strengthen families, and push for equality. We have made great strides in making health care more accessible and affordable so that no one has to go bankrupt just because they get sick. And we have championed a clean energy future while protecting our beautiful landscapes, our coastlines, and our precious natural resources for future generations.

In recent months, I have often been asked what I will miss most about serving in Congress. While there is much to miss, the answer is easy: it is the people. To me, this job has always been and always will be about the people: the people we represent, the people who work so hard to keep this place going, the people on my staff over the years who have been so dedicated to making our community and our country just a little bit better—and the people I serve with here, you, my colleagues.

It has been such a privilege and pleasure to get to know you and work alongside many of you over the years, learning more about your districts, your backgrounds, and your families. After all, isn't this what Congress was meant to be? You, my colleagues, coming from all over the country, from all walks of life, to represent your neighbors and communities in this place, this Congress, to work together for the good of our Nation.

During my time in Congress, I have been so proud of those laws we have