

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DEBBIE BYLER FOR RECEIVING THE PATIENT ADVOCATE AWARD FROM THE HEALTHSOUTH REHABILITATION HOSPITAL OF ALTOONA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Debbie Byler of Martinsburg, PA, winner of the Patient Advocate Award from the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona.

Debbie is cofounder and coordinator of John's Way Medical Equipment Ministry, a faith-based outreach program of Clover Creek Church of the Brethren. John's Way provides wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds and other medical equipment to individuals who do not have the necessary funds or medical insurance.

Debbie has been instrumental in the growth of John's Way which donated 16 pieces of equipment in its first year in 2009. Last year, the program made available more than 4,200 items to those in need. She oversees 40 volunteers who take requests, clean and repair equipment, pick up donations and deliver items to clients.

Debbie and her work at John's Way have had a significant, positive impact on the local community. Given her admirable actions in support of individuals and families facing hardship, Debbie is unquestionably deserving of this recognition. As such, it is my honor to help celebrate her having received this award.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LUCIANO 'LUCKY' VARELA

HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of a true public servant and a dear friend from my home state of New Mexico.

I have been fortunate in my life to have had the example, the mentorship and the friendship of some truly extraordinary individuals. I was deeply saddened to learn that one of those extraordinary individuals, former State Representative Luciano 'Lucky' Varela, is no longer with us.

Lucky was a political giant in New Mexico, a true public servant who was loved and respected by all who knew him. Representative Varela was seen by many as the conscience of the New Mexico Legislature—caring, knowledgeable, and always ready to lend a hand to anyone in need. During his 30 years of dedicated service, he became one of New Mexico's most profound political leaders, and one of our state's best representatives for working families.

Lucky represented a Santa Fe-area House seat in the Roundhouse from 1987 through 2016, where he served as chairman of the influential Finance Committee, among other important committee posts. When it came to state finances and fiscal matters, Lucky's command of the subject was encyclopedic. One of his colleagues once said that Lucky had probably forgotten more about state finances than the experts that appeared before his committee ever knew. Truer words were never spoken. Over the course of his long and memorable career, Varela was a champion for fair wages and reasonable pay increase for state employees, and protecting those who served our state by working in state government. When Lucky saw a problem, he acted to correct it.

His leadership and compassion shined throughout his life. He inspired those who got to know him and many who never met him. His life and his service have left an indelible imprint on the thousands of New Mexicans he helped while in office, but even more importantly, Lucky Varela's legacy will live on through the many people he mentored and relationships he fostered.

Before I close, I want to share some of the remembrances from those who knew him and worked with him.

Senator TOM UDALL said Lucky "represented the people of Santa Fe with honor, integrity and heart. He will be remembered for his honesty about the need to address our challenges in order to move our state forward, and especially for his deep knowledge of the state budget and its impact on everyone in New Mexico."

"Lucky truly made New Mexico a better place. He understood the numbers; just as importantly, he understood the people behind those numbers—their struggles, hopes and dreams. He gave selflessly to the people of Santa Fe and the entire state of New Mexico, and we are better for his leadership. We will miss him dearly."

Former Governor Bill Richardson called Lucky "a master legislator whose expertise on the budget and finances was unparalleled. He was also a gentle soul who cared deeply about his Santa Fe constituents and his wonderful family."

Regarding Lucky, Attorney General Hector Balderas said he was "grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to serve under his leadership in the New Mexico House of Representatives. He was a strong voice for New Mexico's children, families and state employees."

New Mexico House Speaker Brian Egolf called Lucky "a stalwart advocate for working people, for using our resources wisely, and for the people of Santa Fe. Lucky was beloved in Santa Fe for many reasons, not the least of which was that he knew more about the state's budget than most of us ever will. He never shied away from asking tough questions and giving selflessly of his time and energy to make New Mexico a better state."

We will miss Lucky, but we will never forget him.

RECOGNIZING NORTHWEST INDIANA'S NEW CITIZENS

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and sincerity that I take this time to congratulate thirty individuals who will take their oaths of citizenship on Friday, September 15, 2017. This memorable occasion, presided over by Judge Philip P. Simon, will be held at the United States Courthouse and Federal Building in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the world to the United States in search of better lives for their families. Oath ceremonies are a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America—that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success than here in America.

On September 15, 2017, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oaths of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Dominic Kwadwo Manu, Anas Hashem Mohammad Salameh, Mikhail Gennadiyevich Kapustin, Beata Joanna Nabrzyska, Jaroslaw Nabrzyski, Radoslaw Jan Nabrzyski, Daniel Joseph Perfilio Smith, Ramiro Malagon Ramirez, Ma Marina Diaz de Malagon, Martha Alicia Vargas Somosa, Raymundo Ibis Quintas Garcia, Sheri Ahmady, Monica Diaz Nevarez, Susana Jasna Diurych Diaz, Lola Li Fuller, Luz Maria Hernandez, Hana Kang, Biljana Loskoski, Leticia Noguez, Jose Angel Recio, Juan Carlos Rodriguez, Andres Saragoza, Farhat Naheed Shiekh, Swetha Vinjimoor, and Anna Sijie Xiong.

Although each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country "... of the people, by the people, and for the people." They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision that they want to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals who will become citizens of the United States of America on September 15, 2017. They, too, will be American citizens, guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate them and welcome them.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

TRIBUTE TO BRAD PIERCE

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation to Brad Pierce, Aurora City Council Member At Large, for his many years of extraordinary work and dedication to the City of Aurora. Council Member Pierce's dedication to the City of Aurora and his leadership and vision has, amongst other accomplishments, contributed to the city's designation as the Safest Large City in America.

As an Aurora City Council Member, Brad Pierce has consistently and effectively guided city policy towards increased quality of life and growth. He continually provided the City of Aurora with guidance and leadership in his roles as the Chair of the Management and Finance Policy Committee and as the Vice-Chair of the Water Policy Committee.

Council Member Pierce has dedicated his time in elected office to making our community and the State of Colorado a better place for its residents. He serves as the President of the National Organization to Insure a Sound-Controlled Environment (N.O.I.S.E) and represents the State of Colorado and the City of Aurora as a member of National League of Cities Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Steering Committee.

In addition to making the City of Aurora a better place to live, I would also like to recognize Brad Pierce's work as the Former President and current Board Member for the Community College of Aurora Foundation. Without a doubt, Councilmember Pierce has enhanced the quality of life for every citizen in the City of Aurora throughout his tenure as an Aurora City Council Member and resident of our great city.

Mr. Speaker, Brad Pierce represents the very best the State of Colorado and our nation has to offer. I offer my sincere appreciation for his unyielding dedication to public service and I wish him the very best of luck as he leaves the Aurora City Council and moves on to future endeavors.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLORENCE DOUGLAS CENTER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Florence Douglas Center in Vallejo, California, upon the occasion of its 40th Anniversary serving seniors in our community.

In 1975, Mayor Florence Douglas of Vallejo appointed the late Lou Burgelin, a retired chief progressman at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard and a tireless advocate for seniors, to form a committee to study and organize the best way to open a senior facility. Lou envisioned a place where local seniors could continue to improve themselves after retirement. Mayor Douglas and the committee secured funds to build a new facility on a vacant parcel on Amador Street where the Center stands

today. The Florence Douglas Center officially opened in August 1977.

Over the years, the Center established many traditions and helpful programs. Along with social events, bingo twice a week and ongoing bus trips to casinos, the Center offers many opportunities for seniors to learn. There are several course options, including Zumba instruction and French and Spanish lessons. Technology has changed quite a bit since 1977, and the Center has kept up to date by building their own lab to host computer classes.

The Center hosts many annual events including an International Gala, the Fall FUNraiser, and a popular Luau. The Health and Technology Fair is a one-stop shop for seniors to gather information from multiple healthcare providers. On every Christmas Day since 1984 the Center has hosted hundreds of seniors for a delicious Holiday Dinner. The Dinner gives seniors who otherwise would not have a meal the opportunity to be served by their friends from the Center. In 2009, the Center named this tradition "The Free Lou Burgelin Holiday Dinner," a fitting tribute for a place where seniors gather to serve seniors.

Mr. Speaker, for the past forty years the Florence Douglas Center has been a place where the seniors in our community can gather to take classes, make friends and have meals. The U.S. Census Bureau expects the population of seniors to double between 2012 and 2050. The Center will be an important part of our community's effort to improve the lives of our seniors for the next forty years and beyond. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor the Center here today.

RECOGNIZING SHELLY KERCHNER FOR RECEIVING A PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM THE HEALTHSOUTH REHABILITATION HOSPITAL OF ALTOONA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Shelly Kerchner, one of the winners of the 24th annual Personal Achievement Award from the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona. This award is given to encourage and recognize those who have made an outstanding effort to deal with or overcome a disability. This year, Shelly has earned that distinction.

Shelly's life changed eleven years ago in 2006 with she fell down a flight of stairs, suffering a devastating spinal cord injury. She was only able to move her eyes and had weak movement in both of her hands. Shelly's medical prognosis was bleak, indicating she would never walk again or use her hands. Yet, through perseverance, hard work and dedication she proved that grim forecast wrong.

Today, Shelly is now walking with braces and a rolling walker and is independent with her everyday tasks. She cooks, cleans, drives, practices yoga and is an author. She is said to be an inspiration to many people through her Internet blog and her published book—*Standing Tall: The Healing Power of Gratitude*.

I am humbled to recognize the truly impressive recovery Shelly has made. Her strength

and positivity in the face of such adversity is remarkable. As such, it is my pleasure to wish Shelly the best as she continues to reclaim her health and life.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF GREEN BAY

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 70th Anniversary of the Optimist Club of Green Bay. Since its founding in 1947, this community service organization has made a profound impact across the Greater Green Bay Area by bringing many activities, improvements, and educational opportunities to the youth of Green Bay.

The Optimist Club of Green Bay has been a sponsor of youth baseball and softball, in addition to being a strong advocate of the "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign and the "Winners Wear Helmets" bicycle initiative. The Optimist Club of Green Bay also hosts an annual oratorical contest for high school students designed to encourage them to gain experience in public speaking as a means of providing information to others. The two winners from each year's contest are generously awarded with a college scholarship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of this body to join me in applauding the Optimist Club of Green Bay and the 2,500 other local optimist clubs across world for their commitment to brightening the future of the youth in their respective communities.

HONORING J. MICHAEL ANDERSON UPON RECEIPT OF THE 2017 ZUNIC AWARD

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize J. Michael Anderson, the 2017 recipient of the Zunic Award as presented by the Syracuse Football Club.

The Syracuse Football Club is a group of former Syracuse Orange football players focused on making a difference in the Central New York community. The Zunic Award was created to honor Mike and Judy Zunic, who died tragically in a United Airlines plane crash in Sioux City, Iowa on July 18, 1989. The pilot, anticipating landing difficulties, requested volunteers to give up their seats and sit at the exit doors to assist passengers in the event of an emergency. Mike and Judy gave up their seats in first class to sit at one of the doors. They both died in the crash and those in the Zunics' original seats survived. The Zunic Award honors those, like Mike and Judy, who have acted selflessly for the good of others.

This year's Zunic Award recipient, J. Michael Anderson, is a former Orange offensive lineman, and has tragically lost two of his three sons—Jimmy and Eric—to the opioid epidemic devastating our community and our nation. Despite this extraordinary loss, Mike