

None of this should be controversial. This is all common sense, or at least should be, to those who want to help more Americans to vote.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING EDDIE MANFORD BUFFALOE, SR. ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and recognize my constituent and friend, Officer Eddie Manford Buffaloe, Sr. as he retires from seventeen years of honorable service as a courtroom bailiff for District and Superior Courts in Northampton County, North Carolina. The past seventeen years as a courtroom bailiff is but a part of a long and storied career in law enforcement that spanned more than half a century.

Officer Buffaloe was born in Northampton County in Gumberry, North Carolina on June 3, 1931. He was one of ten children born to the former Geneva Brooks and Eddie Bruce Buffaloe. He attended Northampton County Training School in Garysburg, North Carolina which was recognized as a "Christian Institution for Negro Youths of Both Sexes." Following graduation, on December 5, 1951 at age 20, Eddie Buffaloe enlisted in the United States Army.

He served on active duty for two years before transferring to the Army Reserve where he served an additional five years. After nearly seven years of military service, Eddie received an Honorable Discharge and returned to his Northampton County home.

It was in 1961 that Eddie's law enforcement career commenced when he volunteered as a Special Deputy with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department where he worked the night shift. In 1965, Officer Buffaloe became a full time Deputy Sheriff with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department. His love of law enforcement compelled him to learn everything he could about his work.

Officer Buffaloe participated in and completed significant training at the Northampton County Law Enforcement Officers Training School, United States Treasury Department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division; Roanoke-Chowan Training Center; and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In 1991 at the age of 70 and after sixteen years with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department, Officer Buffaloe was appointed Chief of Police for the town of Rich Square. He honorably and faithfully protected the residents of Rich Square and led his department for eight years. During his service as Police Chief, in June of 1996, Chief Buffaloe was tragically shot by a citizen during a domestic dispute but he recovered and continued serving the people of that community until his retirement in 1999. Always driven to serve others, he embarked on yet another career in public service by serving as a courtroom bailiff for District and Superior Courts in Northampton County.

From 1999 until 2016—17 years—Officer Eddie Buffaloe kept the peace when court was

in session. He served as a bailiff under three different elected Sheriffs and is now ready to enjoy his hard earned retirement.

At every step along his storied life, Police Chief Eddie Buffaloe, Sr. was accompanied by his wife the former Ruth Langford. The two were married on January 4, 1959 and just recently celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary. Together, they had three sons—Anthony, Deon, and Eddie Jr. who followed in his father's footsteps in law enforcement and now serves as Chief of Police in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Eddie Manford Buffaloe, Sr. has dedicated his entire adult life to public service. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the dedication and selflessness displayed by Chief Buffaloe over a more than 70 years first as a soldier, then as a volunteer Special Deputy, Deputy Sheriff, Police Chief, and finally as a courtroom bailiff. While Chief Buffaloe is deserving of far greater accolades from a grateful public, my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in expressing our sincere appreciation for Chief Buffaloe's hard work and sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

ZACHARY "ZACH" LEN—BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY

Zach was born on April 20, 1989. He grew up in the ice rink—he started skating at four and never stopped. Zach had a way about him, always smiling and laughing. He was always quiet and shy at first but once he was comfortable he would open up. When Zach went to college, he started to dabble with prescription pills. Zach did a great job hiding his addiction from the world. Eventually, it became clear that he had a problem, and that it was out of control. That is when the cycle of detox and enrollment in treatment centers began. This vicious cycle would take place every couple of months; Zach would be sober for some time, relapse, then start the cycle all over again.

Zach and his sister's relationship became very rocky during the three years prior to

his death. She could read Zach like a book and he knew that. When Zach would use he would stay as far away from his sister as possible and, when he was sober, it was like learning to love a new person. "I couldn't stand being around him when he was using," writes his sister. "He was nasty and argumentative. I would have done anything in my power to take this burden away from Zach, but he was the only one who had the power to change and overcome his struggles. And he tried. He tried so hard."

Zach touched many lives with his strength, determination, courage, and compassion. Zach was an amazing chef, and was able to make anyone laugh. He loved his friends more than anything else and would do anything for them. Everyone wanted the same thing for Zach: they wanted him to be happy and sober, but most of all they wanted Zach to stay alive. Zach was a free spirit and wasn't afraid to be who he was. He loved going to shows with his friends, and supporting their bands. He would even make them continue to jam when everyone else was done. Zach would dance this dorky silly dance, smile, and enjoy life. He never seemed to worry about what the next day would bring.

But things are not always as they seem. Zach was ashamed of his addiction; he kept it very private and very rarely would ask for help—he wanted to keep his closest friends out of that part of his life.

"It will be three years on January 28, 2017, and the pain doesn't seem to ever go away," writes his sister. "All of us—me, my parents, and Zach's friends are still learning to live this 'new normal' life, a life without Zach."

"On that cold Tuesday, we lost a son, a grandson, a brother, a nephew, a cousin, a best friend. I will never get to go to a New York Ranger game like we always talked about, or a Dave Matthews concert. So many things we had always talked about, that now I will experience by myself for the both of us."

"I'm so thankful for all the times we shared and all of the memories we made as kids and as adults. I will treasure them always. They are frozen in time in my mind. Images of Zach at happier times is the way I want to remember him. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and I couldn't agree more."

DANIEL AARON LUCEWICH—PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY

Daniel was considered the Golden Boy in his family. He had a high IQ and was loved by all of his teachers. Growing up, Daniel worked for his aunt and uncle at the family restaurant, Peter Pank; he was often referred to as the "Prince of the Pank."

Daniel cherished the holidays and everything they were about—especially how it brought his extended family together. During the holidays, Daniel would put up all the outdoor decorations—his family even won a place in our township's holiday decorating contests for several years. From the age of ten, Daniel was well known within his family for being extremely skilled at assembling anything; he could put things together without the instructions.

Daniel loved surfing. He and his friends would surf off the inlet near Point Pleasant. He also enjoyed bowling and golfing with his uncle and hanging with his cousins playing cards. However, Daniel's most passionate hobby was buying cars and fixing them up.

Daniel was always there for his friends. He was the person they called when they needed a hand moving, painting an apartment, or even changing a flat tire at three in the morning. Daniel truly had a heart of gold. He lit up a room just by walking into one. Daniel loved his two sisters Fallon and Katie and his older brother Christopher.

His entire family loves and misses him dearly.

ALEXANDER “ALEX” JOSEPH MARKS—
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

The final death certificate from the Orange County Coroner arrived in the Marks family mailbox: “Cause of death: acute heroin intoxication.” On February 6th, 2013, Alex’s father found their 19-year-old son, Alexander Joseph Marks, dead in his bedroom at their home in Huntington Beach, California. His family found a needle and heroin on Alex’s desk. They couldn’t believe that Alex had turned to heroin and were devastated to learn this was the way their son had died.

As you can imagine, the Marks family are having a difficult time. The wound is so deep, so raw; they thought he had overcome his addiction. Alex was working over college break before he was to go back to school to become an electrician. Externally, it looked like he was doing well, but now his family understands that internally, he was sick with the disease of addiction. There was no note . . . Alex’s family learned later that he had accidentally overdosed because after so many months of being clean, his tolerance was low.

During elementary and junior high school Alex was bullied. He had two rare medical conditions; Osteochondromatosis (a rare bone disease) and Von Willebrand (a blood clotting disease), in addition to mental health issues. At a young age, he had experiences that no kid should; many surgeries after which he was prescribed pain medications, countless doctor visits, and home health care nurses who administered IV medication. He was diagnosed with ADHD around the 5th grade.

Alex’s Grandma died during his freshman year of high school. She had been the rock in his life and he had a hard time living without her. He began self-medicating with pot and alcohol to cover his grief, which eventually led to him using pills and other drugs. Meanwhile, he was having a rough time trying to fit in socially and many of his friends were also using drugs. Alex was not involved in school activities, no matter how many times his family encouraged him.

When his addiction progressed, Alex was admitted to the University of California, Irvine as well as Loma Linda Medical Center psychiatric hospital. Upon release, he attended a local treatment program and was expected to return to high school after 30 days. His family sought help from many medical professionals and was diagnosed with depression and bipolar disorder. When nothing seemed to be helping, Alex was sent to Heritage Residential Treatment Center in Provo, Utah, where he spent 8 months in a dual diagnosis treatment center. He came home and graduated high school but within a few months he was hanging out with old friends and local’s he’d met in treatment. In December 2011, at the age of 18, Alex was arrested and charged with a felony for receiving stolen property with the intent to sell. He was sent to jail for 7 months.

Alex followed the path of many before him; he was stealing for drug money—opioids. He ended up with 3 years’ probation with the stipulation that if he completed all that was required, the felony would be removed from his record. These tough learning experiences made him realize that he never wanted to go back to jail. He wanted his freedom—he wanted his life back.

On July 5, 2012, Alex was released from jail at 3 a.m. (without guidance or supervision—something his family will never understand). Although he was overwhelmed by the court fees and classes he had to take, Alex was determined to succeed. Once again he was a joy to be around and his family believed that the

worst was over. He started an electrician training program at Long Beach City College and never missed a day the entire semester.

On Tuesday, February 5, 2013, two young adults came to the house; his family believes Alex may have met these “friends” at his court ordered drug classes. They also believed Alex purchased heroin that day, from these “friends”. Alex returned home from meeting with his probation officer around 7:30 p.m., had some soup, watched the Lakers game with his dad, said “Goodnight, I love you,” and then went to his room. At approximately 5:30 a.m. on February 6, 2013, his father found Alex dead in his room. The coroner report stated he had died around midnight.

“I’m sure this story is all too similar to many you’ve heard or read before from other families who have been through this nightmare,” writes Alex’s mother. “These past 4½ years have been the most difficult of our lives.”

“One of the most frustrating parts of this journey, was how hard it was to get good help for Alex. I prayed each and every day for God to shine his light upon my son; to bring the right people into his life. He needed someone other than his parents to help him but this did not happen.”

“As you can imagine, writing this is very difficult, but we must not stay silent. We must speak out in order to make the changes that are needed both for mental health and addiction treatment in this country.”

SEAN MCLARTY—AUSTELL, GEORGIA

Sean McLarty was born on July 11, 1980, in Lithia Springs, Georgia. Growing up, he was a very happy and loving child and he carried those qualities into adulthood. Sean was always an absolute joy to be around. He had a knack for making people smile; the room would light up whenever he entered. He had two children, Caleb and Mina, who were the loves of his life.

Sean always had an aspiration for acting and went on to be featured in several films and TV shows. He had a small role in one of Tyler Perry’s House of Payne episodes; played a mute crook in a movie called Three Rookies; was in the youtube series Fighting Angels; and had roles in various short films. Sean was also exceptional at repairing computers and electronics—if it was broken, he could fix it.

Prior to his unexpected death, Sean wanted to start an organization that he would name “Families Against Drugs,” to help families affected by addiction, and let them know they are not alone in this fight. He had a huge vision for this organization. However, Sean could not seem to help himself.

On March 28, 2011, Sean was found dead in a motel room just south of Atlanta, Georgia. The autopsy report determined the cause of death to be from the toxic effects of Methamphetamine. However, even the police officer in charge of his case, didn’t believe there was enough meth in Sean’s system to cause death.

After speaking to someone close to him, Sean’s family found out that he had been in possession of a drug called 1,4-Butanediol, which is comparable to the drug “gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid” (GHB); and acts as a stimulant and aphrodisiac, enhancing euphoria. This drug is what is believed to have killed Sean. 1,4-Butanediol is odorless, colorless, and extremely difficult to detect in toxicology screening.

Sean was never a regular drug user, he used more casually. When Sean died from an overdose, it seemed unreal that it would happen to someone like him, with so much potential and life left to live.

AMBER MERSING—PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA

“Thinking about Amber’s story and how to share it with 144aDay was difficult,” writes

Amber’s Uncle Lou. “I am sure you all understand the emotions involved in putting this together. As I thought, I recalled Amber’s funeral service in Pittsburgh, PA. Her grandfather and her cousin (my daughter) both spoke wonderful words during the service and I felt this would be the best way to share Amber’s story.”

“Below is what my daughter Gianna (12 years old) wrote. She stood and delivered this to everyone at Amber’s funeral service. Savannah (Gianna’s sister/Amber’s cousin) stood up at the podium to read a scripture with her Aunt Nina (Amber’s Mom). I am so proud of all of them.”

Hello,

Amber was like a sister to me. We had so much fun together from gymnastics competitions to dancing. I loved her so much. I loved how we were close cousins. And I will always remember all the fun we had. I am gonna miss her a lot. I want for everyone in this room to remember that she is looking down at us. One more thing—in heaven she is with Blaze. She used to dress up with him and get their picture taken.

Amber’s grandfather delivered a beautiful eulogy after Gianna spoke, here is what he said:

Where do I begin? I feel like a bird with a broken wing. God only allowed us to have Amber for a short period of time but during that time she touched many lives and left us with a lot of memories. To me, she was both a child and a grandchild; the two could never be separated. She brought the joy of a grandchild and the anxiety of a child all at one time. Amber came into my life as a toddler and those good memories will remain with me forever.

I thank God for putting Amber in my life and I am thankful that I got to see her grow from a helpless little girl into a beautiful young lady. Amber was a big part of my life for the last twenty plus years. I was blessed to have known her for most of her time on Earth. I’m sure that Amber has left all of you with a lot of good memories and I hope that you share those memories with me and with each other some time.

Amber liked being the center of attention when she was in her comfort zone, but would hide when that comfort zone began to collapse. She dreamed of singing in front of a large audience when it was just a couple of us. But when the couple of us became a few of us, she would go into hibernation. She was both shy and outgoing and could switch from one to the other and back again in the blink of an eye.

Her creativity was endless. She and Grandma could turn scraps of anything into works of art. Amber had an interest in everything from acrobatics to woodworking and all things in between. Amber gave me those hand-made treasures with such pride and I still have many of them.

Amber also had that gentle side. She seldom raised her voice and was uncomfortable when others did so in anger. She was a caretaker at heart, which showed when she worked at Norbert’s. Amber was the oldest of our grandkids, so she loved playing with and helping her younger cousins. She learned patience from her Grandma and passed some of that on to me. I loved those hugs when we parted company.

Amber could light up any room she entered even as she struggled with depression—she so wanted to be happy. She handled the depression in the best way that she could. I watched her go through those ups and downs so many times. When she thought she had a plan to regain control of her life, she would get slapped down again and would not be capable of following through with her plan. After seeing Amber’s struggle, I thanked God that I have never personally experienced

those ups and downs. I also thank God that it is not my place to judge her if she felt that she was doing her best. Jesus said, “Judge not, and you will not be judged, condemn not, and you will not be condemned, forgive, and you will be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37) Because one’s behavior toward others often ends up being paid back in kind—and sometimes even to a greater degree—Jesus continued to urge His disciples to be tolerant. In particular, Jesus prohibits condemning others and commands forgiveness.

I remember Amber as that little girl who would run and jump on my lap in happiness and run to me when she was afraid. There were the play-in-the-dirt clothes and pretty girl dresses; dance lessons, softball games, and taekwondo; pierced ears, nose, lip, etc; curly hair, braided hair, and straight hair; tennis shoes and high heels; Disney movies and The Nightmare Before Christmas; school and church; and so on and so on and so on. Pick any of them or add your own. Some of them I didn’t like at the time but I’m going to miss every single one. I have a lot of memories and no one can take them away. Amber has been immortalized in my heart and those memories will remain. I’m sure all of you have fond memories of Amber that you will hold on to.

Amber believed in God and I believe that Jesus has welcomed her into Heaven where she will spend eternity. Amber no longer has to deal with the pain associated with mortality. I have faith that I will see her again and that she will be there to welcome me into eternity. I will miss her dearly but I can now think of her as an angel that is looking over me and she will look out for me when I need help. I love you Amber and I always will.

TRENTON MUNN—IONIA, MICHIGAN

Trenton Munn, died August 21, 2016, from an accidental heroin overdose. He was 31 years old.

Trenton suffered from drug addiction since his late teen years. He fast became addicted to Oxycontin, and when that became hard to come by, he turned to heroin. It was a cheaper, easier to find alternative.

When his son, Harley was born in May 2012, Trenton tried to quit cold turkey. He wanted to get clean for his son. Trenton also suffered from anxiety and depression. During the past four years Trenton tried repeatedly to get off heroin.

This past March his family discovered that Trenton had advanced to shooting up heroin. Even though he had said he would not stick a needle in his veins.

After many failed attempts in treatment, with everyone telling us we had to do tough love, we decided to remove Trenton from our home. It broke his family’s hearts having to put their child out on the streets.

Trenton was then taken in by a friend. The friend promised he didn’t condone heroin and there’d be none of it in his home.

Throughout this past summer, Trenton would come to his family’s home for his parental visits with his son. Since his son’s mother had gotten in trouble with the law, Trenton was given full custody of Harley. Trenton also had just begun a new job, was looking healthier and had gained some weight. His family thought he was kicking his addiction. Things were looking up.

Due to Trenton not having a car, his parents were driving him to and from work. The last day they saw their son was Saturday, August 20, 2016. They picked him up from work at 4:00 p.m., as usual. Nothing really seemed out of the ordinary, other than Trenton not asking what his mother was making for supper. He normally would come have dinner with his family.

When his parents arrived at the friend’s house where Trenton was living, he told

them he’d see them in the morning and that he loved them. He didn’t text or call them that evening.

The dreaded call came at 4:21 a.m. from the friend Trenton was living with. The friend began with: “I think you need to come out here!” Trenton’s mother asked him what was wrong and he replied, “I think Trent’s overdosing!” His mother hung up the phone immediately, jumped out of bed screaming. They got into their car and drove as fast as they could.

They arrived at the friend’s home in a matter of minutes. The police and the ambulance were already there. They were met by an officer on the porch of the house. It was too late. Trenton was dead.

The authorities believe Trenton received what they call a “hot load”: heroin laced with fentanyl.

That same weekend, over 75 overdoses were reported in Ohio. The heroin was laced with elephant tranquilizers.

“This has been the worse pain we ever felt,” writes Trenton’s mother. “Nothing or no one can ever bring our son back. Our grandson is going to grow up without his father.”

JEFFERSON CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud the Jefferson Center for Mental Health for being honored by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce as the Non-Profit of the Year.

To be honored as the Non-Profit of the Year by the Arvada Chamber, a non-profit must show how they support Arvada through their programs, services and involvement. These non-profits are known for their ingenuity and innovation to overcome challenges as well as their active and effective work with the local business community.

The Jefferson Center for Mental Health is one of these non-profits. As a community mental health center that looks to inspire hope and improve the lives of the members of their community, their incredible work and innovative approach has helped to serve those in our community who often have nowhere else to turn. In addition to receiving this recognition, Jefferson Center for Mental Health has also been named a Top Workplace for four straight years by the Denver Post.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Jefferson Center for Mental Health for this well-deserved recognition by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. PETER J. VISCOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. VISCOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise today to celebrate Black History Month and its 2017 theme—The Crisis in Black Education. This year’s theme reflects on the crucial role of education in the

past, present, and future of the African American community. As Americans, we come together to commend the many educators, writers, and mentors who have worked so diligently to improve educational opportunities for African American students throughout the country, but we must acknowledge that there is still much more progress to be made.

Throughout American history, the unfortunate reality is that there have been racial barriers to equal education. The crisis in black education began during the era of slavery when it was against the law for slaves to learn how to read and write. Before the Civil War, free blacks in northern cities had to walk long distances to attend the one school regulated solely for African American students, while this limitation did not exist for white children. By 1910, segregation was established throughout the south. African American schools were of lower quality and received less government funding per student than in white schools. During the Civil Rights Movement, significant steps toward positive change were made, including the Supreme Court case of Brown vs. Board of Education, which outlawed segregated school facilities for black and white students at the state level. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended state and local laws requiring segregation.

Today, many African American youth remain exposed to public school systems where resources are limited, overcrowding occurs, and a glaring racial achievement gap is evident, especially in urban areas. As Americans, we must continue to work together to resolve the crisis in black education as it is, without a doubt, one of the most critical issues facing our communities.

This month and always, it is important that we honor and celebrate America’s greatest advocates for equal rights and civil liberties. Along with this month’s theme, we honor those who have fought for equal educational opportunities for African Americans, including Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Cornell West, Maxine Smith, Carlotta Walls Lanier, Joe Lewis Clark, Fannie Jackson Coppin, and Alexander Crummell, among many others. As we pay tribute to these heroes of American history, let us remember their profound perseverance, sacrifice, and struggle in the fight for freedom and equality, and the remarkable impact their contributions have had in shaping our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating Black History Month and honoring those who fought, and continue to fight, for civil rights and justice. We honor the African American educators, scholars, and supporters of educational equality, who have played such a critical role in changing the landscape of American society for the better. As we reflect on the state of black education, let us never forget the struggle of our predecessors while remembering that there is still much work to be done.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF WIN AND POLLY BELANGER

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Win and Polly Belanger