

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BARRY S. GALE FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Mr. Barry S. Gale from Gouverneur, New York. This month, Mr. Gale will be celebrating 50 years as a volunteer firefighter at the Gouverneur Fire Department.

He joined the Department in 1967 as a dedicated citizen and volunteer. Mr. Gale was assigned to Hose Company Number 1 and served in the position for eight years. His remarkable service gave him the opportunity to advance within the Fire Department, serving as 2nd Assistant Chief from 1975 to 1977. He then rose to 1st Assistant Chief and served in the position until 1979. From there, Mr. Gale served as Chief Engineer until 1981.

Mr. Gale has earned numerous awards for his devotion to the Fire Department. He received the Department's "Chiefs Award" in 2006 and then again in 2009. In 2011, he was named the Department's "Firefighter of the Year." These awards and Mr. Gale's years of dedicated service are a testament to his character and the community he has called home.

On this day, I want to take a moment to thank Mr. Barry Gale for his many years of public service to our district, especially to the town of Gouverneur. Congratulations on celebrating 50 years of volunteer service at the Gouverneur Fire Department.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF GARY ANDRES

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions Gary Andres has made to the House of Representatives.

Gary most recently served as the Staff Director for the Committee on Energy and Commerce under the leadership of Congressman FRED UPTON. In his last term as Chairman, Congressman UPTON partnered with me to author the 21st Century Cures Act. I got to know Gary very well over nearly three years as we worked to pass the bill into law.

It was a real pleasure working with Gary. Even at the darkest moments, when we couldn't seem to find a way to come to a bipartisan agreement on Cures, Gary's steady leadership and immutable resolve helped to light the way forward. His wise counsel is one of the reasons that bill was enacted into law. Although he is leaving Capitol Hill, the 21st Century Cures Act stands as a testament to his immeasurable contributions to this body.

Gary is a person of integrity and an incredibly effective staffer. The American people

were lucky to have his service with the House of Representatives.

HONORING PHILLIP "RUSS" RIZZO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the career and public service of Phillip "Russ" Rizzo, as he concludes his service on the Common Council of the city of North Tonawanda, New York.

A lifelong city resident and U.S. Army Veteran, prior to entering public service, Russ was the owner of Rizzo and Ricotta Office Products. While operating his business, Russ began his public service on the city's Zoning Board of Appeals, serving from 1994 to 1996. Russ joined the Common Council in 2000, working to alleviate flooding problems in the 1st Ward, and later spearheading efforts to revitalize the NT waterfront, culminating in the opening of a restaurant at Gratwick Riverside Park. In addition to his focus on neighborhoods and the waterfront, Russ put a great deal of time and energy into rejuvenating the city's downtown business district.

From 2010 through 2012, Russ served as a member of the Niagara County Legislature. Later in 2012, Russ returned to the Common Council where he continued to serve constituents, personally addressing their issues and making sure no calls went unanswered.

In his retirement, Russ and his wife Mary look forward to spending more time with their family. They are parents to four children, grandparents to seven and are blessed with one great-grandchild.

In 2012, I was given the honor of having the opportunity to represent North Tonawanda. Few public officials welcomed me with a greater degree of warmth than did Russ Rizzo. Russ is a true gentleman who only had the very best interests of his hometown at heart. His constituents were well-served by him, and I am honored both by his collegiality as well as his friendship.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to honor Russ and recognize all that he has done for the City of North Tonawanda. I know that you join me and all of our colleagues in wishing Russ, Mary and their entire family the very best of good health and happiness in the months and years to come.

HONORING LORETTA WEINBERG ON HER BIRTHDAY

HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on her birthday, to honor the tireless dedication of Senator Loretta Weinberg to the people of New Jersey. Senator Weinberg has

● 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.

been a remarkable advocate for the people of Bergen County for decades, serving first as Assistant Administrator of Bergen County, on the Teaneck Council, then in the New Jersey Assembly and now in the New Jersey State Senate. She is currently the Senate Majority Leader.

Majority Leader Weinberg has used every post she's held to fight tenaciously on behalf of the people of New Jersey. She's advocated relentlessly for making the investments in our infrastructure that we need to keep our economy humming and create new jobs, for ethics and transparency in government, for strengthening our communities, and for women, and for all of those left out of the circle of opportunity.

I salute Weinberg for her strong and dogged voice, her countless accomplishments, and for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the people of New Jersey. I look forward to working with her to serve our mutual constituents in Bergen County.

HONORING STAN JONES

HON. LUKE MESSE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. MESSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend of mine—a policy leader who dedicated his life to providing better educational opportunities for Hoosier kids. His work spanned decades. I am speaking of Indiana's own, Stan Jones.

Most recently, Stan founded Complete College America in order to build a network of states committed to substantially increasing the number of Americans with a postsecondary credential.

Earlier in his career, Stan was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives at age 24. As a member of both the House Education and State Budget committees, he developed expertise in higher education and higher-education finance. All told, Stan served 16 years in the Indiana state legislature and more than five years as a senior advisor to Governor Evan Bayh.

His service as Indiana commissioner for higher education spanned 12 years and the tenure of four different governors from both political parties. As commissioner, he was credited as a primary architect of several landmark education policy initiatives in Indiana. These initiatives included the 21st Century Scholars program, an early promise scholarship program aimed at increasing the number of low-income students attending and completing a postsecondary education; the development of Indiana's new community college system; the creation of Indiana's Education Roundtable; and the implementation of Core 40, a college prep curriculum that has contributed to a significant increase in high school seniors going to college.

Stan was also instrumental in the high school drop-out reform legislation that I authored as a state legislator a decade ago. Those reforms helped drive Indiana's extraordinary progress with its statewide graduation rate improving to nearly 90 percent—an almost 20 percent increase from a decade before.

It is no exaggeration to say those reform ideas were hatched over cheeseburgers and

fries at Loughmiller's Pub & Eatery right across from the Indiana State Capitol. Truth be told, Stan had the ideas, and I simply worked to implement them.

Another great Hoosier, former champion UCLA basketball head coach John Wooden once said, "it's amazing how much can be accomplished if no one cares who gets credit." At his very core, Stan Jones exemplified that ideal.

You will be missed, my friend.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 2, 2017

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.J. Res. 40, disapproving of the Social Security Administration's (SSA) rule-making on the Implementation of the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007. While I have reservations about the rule, I do not believe the Congressional Review Act is the way to fix it.

Under the rule, individuals with a severe, long-term mental disorder who SSA determines are unable to manage their benefits would be placed on the NICS list and prohibited from purchasing a firearm. That tens of thousands of Americans die each year due to gun violence is unconscionable, and I do believe that the government has a role to play in alleviating this public health crisis.

However, as Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus, I understand the concerns of many mental health and disability rights advocates that this rule also has the potential to perpetuate the stigma that people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities are more prone to violence, when they are often more likely to be the victims of violence. I also believe the due process procedures in this rule can and should be strengthened. Nonetheless, I believe these concerns can be addressed without resorting to the Congressional Review Act, and I cannot support this resolution of disapproval.

This is particularly true as passage of the resolution of disapproval could limit SSA's future regulatory activity in this area and could discourage other ongoing efforts to improve gun safety laws. I look forward to working with both the disability community and the Administration to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities while maintaining the integrity of the rulemaking process.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBEN GALLEG

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. GALLEG. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for two roll call votes on Monday, January 30, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Roll Call Vote No. 66—Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: To remove the sunset provision of section 203 of Public Law 105-384 and for other purposes—YES

Roll Call Vote No. 67—Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended: Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act of 2017—YES

HONORING THE CAREER OF MR. GEORGE MESKUS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and achievements of Mr. George Meskus, outgoing Claims Representative at the Merced Social Security branch, and lifelong resident of the San Joaquin Valley. In over 35 years of service to the Social Security Administration, Mr. Meskus has consistently shown his colleagues an exemplary degree of dedication and passion for his work, earning praise from his coworkers and the community he's served over the course of his tenure.

Mr. Meskus's long life of service to the United States began in 1975 with his enlistment in the U.S. Air Force, where he would remain until he began his career with the Modesto Social Security branch in 1981. Mr. Meskus was initially hired as a Service Representative, but was quickly promoted to become a Claims Representative, and eventually moved to the Merced Social Security branch to continue his services.

Throughout his time at the Modesto and Merced Social Security offices, Mr. Meskus has gone above and beyond the expectations of his peers. He has displayed a keen awareness of the sensitive nature which prefaces many of the cases he processes, and always does so with the well-being of his clientele in mind. He has proven to be a fast and efficient employee, and frequently offers his peers direction and historical perspectives on complicated technical issues that so often face members of the Social Security Administration. His willingness to take on more than his fair share of cases has been invaluable to the productivity of the branches that he has served. Such selflessness will be deeply missed by those who have been lucky enough to call Mr. Meskus their coworker.

Mr. Meskus's decision to retire has been bitter-sweet news to process for many of his peers. The Social Security Administration is losing an integral colleague with a wealth of knowledge that has been essential to the efficiency of the branches he has served. The hard work and determination that he has demonstrated throughout his career has earned his well-deserved retirement to become a world traveler and to renew his devotion as a father and grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the career and achievements of Mr. George Meskus. His stalwart commitment to the greater cause of the Social Security Administration has bettered the lives of countless people in Modesto and Merced. As he prepares to travel the world with his wife, Gloria, we wish him the best of luck, and hope his journeys bring him a fruitful life in the years to come.