

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF FINLAND'S
CENTENNIAL

HON. SEAN P. DUFFY

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of the Congressional Friends of Finland Caucus in recognition of Finland's Centennial. For a generation of Finns, this is the most significant commemorative year in their lifetime.

The significance of the anniversary comes with good reason. A century ago, on December 6, 1917, Finland declared itself an independent republic and rejected its status as an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia. As is often the case, independence is not easily won. Soon after breaking away from Tsarist Russia, the country descended into civil war with neighbor pitted against neighbor. However, from the struggle of war, something incredible happened: the Finnish people emerged with renewed purpose and a new national identity.

After 100 years of democracy, Finland has become a shining example to the world of what monumental achievements can be made in a short time. Today, Finland is the pinnacle of Nordic values and culture, a proud member state of the European Union, and a key political and economic partner of the United States. The deep relationships between the United States and Finland cannot be overstated. The United States is the third largest trading partner of Finland and in addition, around 250 Finnish-owned companies, which directly employ about 34,000 people, are based in the United States. Truly, US-Finland relations have never been stronger.

And just a few short months ago, President Trump hosted President Niinistö at the White House. There the Presidents discussed Finland's leadership of the Arctic Council, the coalition to defeat ISIS, and cybersecurity. Furthermore, President Trump pledged an additional half-million dollars to the Fulbright Finland Foundation so that the United States could send more of our brightest students to study and form lasting relationships in Finland.

Our peoples share many common values and interests that make Finns and Americans readily identify with one another. Hard work and the drive to succeed have benefitted both our peoples and embody some of our most deeply-held virtues.

In light of these shared interests and the strong relationship between our peoples, I congratulate all Finns on 100 years of independence. Continued cooperation between our nations will make Finland's second century as robust and vibrant as the first and my colleagues in the House and I look forward to closely working with our Finnish counterparts towards that end. Thank you, Finland, for being a valued friend to the United States and happy centennial.

HONORING THE MINNESOTA CHAPTER OF THE COUNCIL ON AMERICAN ISLAMIC RELATIONS

HON. TIMOTHY J. WALZ

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today in recognition of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Council on American-Islamic Relations—Minnesota Chapter (CAIR-MN). CAIR-MN works, as part of a nationwide network of chapters, to diligently protect and enhance some of the fundamental principles that have shaped America since its inception. They fight to defend the constitutional right to religious freedom. They promote community engagement, inspire civic activism, and defend civil liberties. CAIR-MN's work with Muslims in America has expanded the notions of social justice in our communities and supported the active participation of all our nations' citizens and residents.

Today, too many Americans have a distorted, inaccurate, or unclear understanding of Muslims, who they are, and what they believe. Fortunately, for ten years now, CAIR-MN has taken on the truly difficult, necessary, and rewarding task of dispelling misinformation, enhancing our society's understanding of Muslims and Islam, and combatting bigotry and intolerance. It is my hope that CAIR-MN will continue its remarkable contribution to our society for many more decades to come.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing CAIR-MN for the ten years of invaluable service they have provided to the State of Minnesota and the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING THE MULTIFAITH ALLIANCE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND AFYA FOUNDATION

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an important event in my district-sponsored by the Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees and the Afya Foundation. Last week, these two organizations collected much-needed supplies to benefit those who have suffered from the Syrian civil war.

The Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees has a powerful story to tell. A coalition of over 90 organizations, it has facilitated a partnership between Israeli and Syrian organizations to help deliver critical humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine, to people inside Syria. Containers of donated assistance arrive at Israeli ports, where the Israeli Defense Forces transport the supplies to the Syrian border for distribution by Syrian organizations inside Syria.

Joining the Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees is the Afya Foundation, which has a

record of collecting supplies for humanitarian crises all over the world.

The event in Yonkers, New York will build upon similar events and campaigns which have raised over \$66 million of life-saving assistance.

I applaud the participants in Yonkers, the Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees, the Afya Foundation and all those Americans who have made an effort to help those in desperate need in Syria. I recognize that the Syrian crisis will not be resolved by sending humanitarian assistance. For that, we will need a political solution. However, if we can help a family access food and medicine, help them realize that America has not forgotten them, then we can offer them hope for an end to the violence and war.

HONORING CARTER GILMORE

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory and service of a pillar of the Oakland community, the Honorable Carter Gilmore. Although Mr. Gilmore passed away in 2006, the Oakland African American Museum and Library will be unveiling an exhibit focused on his life and career on December 9th, 2017.

Carter Gilmore was born on May 30th, 1926 in Grapeland, Texas, and served in the US Navy during World War II. In 1947 he married Liz Hampton, and the couple soon moved to Oakland, where Mr. Gilmore worked as a plant manager for Granny Goose Foods.

In 1977, Mr. Gilmore made history when he became the first African American elected to the Oakland City Council. During his tenure, which lasted until 1990, Mr. Gilmore made important contributions to the City of Oakland through his role in the creation of the citizen's police review board, and the city's anti-blitz ordinance, among many other initiatives and accomplishments.

In addition to his work on the City Council, Mr. Gilmore was also an active member of his church, Bethel Missionary Baptist, starting when he first moved to Oakland in the 1950's.

Mr. Gilmore's life was guided by a belief that we should all work to improve our communities, and the lives of our neighbors. He was also staunchly committed to civil rights.

That belief in social justice led him to join the Alameda branch of the NAACP, and he later served as the chapter president. He also served as president of the NAACP's Northern California division. In 1990, he helped lead the investigation into racial discrimination against African American employees at UPS, resulting in the largest settlement in the NAACP's history to that point.

On a personal note, Carter was one of the first people to act as a mentor and advisor to me as I began my career working for Congressman Dellums. He always took time to

● 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.

help clarify issues for me, and he was a true trailblazer who educated our community about the importance of black political power. I will always remember his wise counsel and his friendship.

Though Carter Gilmore died in 2006, his trailblazing legacy as the City of Oakland's first African American elected to the City Council continues to inspire younger generations to aspire for heights that they may not have ever considered without his example.

Today, the Oakland African American Museum and Library is unveiling an exhibit dedicated to Carter Gilmore's life and legacy. Therefore, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I join the family and friends of Carter Gilmore in celebrating his life of public service. I offer my sincerest gratitude to him for all that he did to pave the way for future generations of community-oriented leaders.

HONORING MELODY
WATTENBARGER

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Melody Wattenbarger, the CEO and President of Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico. Ms. Wattenbarger has worked tirelessly to fight hunger for over 30 years.

As CEO and President of Roadrunner Food Bank, Melody created innovative approaches to aid families facing hunger across New Mexico. Her leadership enabled the food bank to assist 70,000 people each week. She created and strengthened key partnerships across communities, including partnerships with schools, doctors, private industry leaders, senior centers, and food pantries. Melody was the founding President of the board for the New Mexico Association of Food Banks from 1999 to 2004 and continues to hold a seat on the board.

Melody Wattenbarger's leadership in hunger relief has not only helped New Mexicans; she was the founding executive director of the High Plains Food Bank in Amarillo, Texas, she worked for the National Food Bank Network (Feeding America), and she regularly served on a variety of Feeding America committees. Melody was named the 2017 John van Hengel Fellow by Feeding America. The award "recognizes the recipient for their leadership, local impact, national influence, commitment, and entrepreneurial spirit in the area of hunger relief."

I am proud to honor Ms. Melody Wattenbarger for her leadership in the fight against hunger. Her efforts are inspirational to the entire community in New Mexico. I am confident that even in retirement she will remain an advocate for families experiencing hunger and her community will be better for her involvement.

CONDEMNING ETHNIC CLEANSING
OF ROHINGYA AND CALLING FOR
AN END TO ATTACKS IN AND AN
IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO
RAKHINE, BURMA

SPEECH OF

HON. BRENDA L. LAWRENCE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 90, which condemns ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calls for an end to the attacks, and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma.

Many consider the Rohingya one of the most persecuted minorities in the world.

The stories that have come out in recent weeks and days are devastating and horrific.

The waves of brutally violent campaigns against the civilians—marked by mass killings, sexual violence, and forced displacement—have resulted in one of the fastest-growing refugee crises of our time.

Women, who account for the majority of those inside the refugee camps, face widespread rape and other forms of sexual violence, and some are even being sold as sex slaves.

Just like our zero-tolerance policy towards persecution within our borders, we must be crystal clear that the United States will not tolerate the persecution of innocent men, women, and children around the world.

I strongly believe that, with the help of the international community, we will find a peaceful solution to this crisis, despite various obstacles in our way.

This resolution is one step forward in that direction.

HONORING SERGEANT MAJOR
ROBERT HAWKINS

HON. TIMOTHY J. WALZ

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Major Robert Hawkins of the United States Army for his extraordinary dedication to duty and service to our Nation. Sergeant Major Hawkins will soon transition from his current assignment as an Army Congressional Legislative Liaison Officer in the House of Representatives to serve in The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology.

A native of Alexandria, Virginia, Sergeant Major Hawkins began his military career as an Airborne Infantryman in 1990. He subsequently served in assignments to Fort Kobbe, Republic of Panama; Fort Myers, Florida; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and thrice at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Sergeant Major Hawkins has served in multiple leadership and staff positions throughout his career. His combat deployments include one tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and three tours in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2014, Sergeant Major Hawkins was selected as a Fellow in the Army Congressional Fellowship Program. He subsequently served twelve months as a Defense Legislative Fellow in my office, representing the First Congressional District of Minnesota. While working on my team, I came to know Sergeant Major Hawkins as a shining example of the Army Values set forth in the Noncommissioned Officer Creed. Competence is indeed Sergeant Major Hawkins' watchword, and his commitment to doing what good NCOs do, accomplishing the mission taking care of his teammates, was second to none.

For next two years, Sergeant Major Hawkins served as a Congressional Legislative Liaison Officer in the United States Army House Liaison Division. As the primary liaison between Members of the House of Representatives, their Staffs, Committees, and the Army, he has provided insight and understanding of Army policies, actions, operations, and requirements. His first-hand knowledge of the military, its culture, and traditions has been of tremendous value to Congressional offices. Sergeant Major Hawkins was especially effective in his service to Members and staff as he escorted them on fact-finding and oversight delegations within and outside the United States. Members and staff found him to be a thoughtful, intelligent, and dedicated Soldier in the best traditions of America's Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to know and serve with Sergeant Major Hawkins during his time as an Army Congressional Fellow and Congressional Legislative Liaison Officer in the House of Representatives. On behalf of a grateful Nation, it is my honor to recognize the selfless service and sacrifice of Sergeant Major Robert Hawkins and his family. I wish Sergeant Major Hawkins the very best as he begins a new chapter of dedicated service to our nation in the United States Army.

NORTHWEST INDIANA ISLAMIC
CENTER 25TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PETER J. VISCOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Mr. VISCOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I congratulate the Northwest Indiana Islamic Center, as its members and leaders join together to celebrate the center's 25th anniversary. In honor of this special occasion, the Northwest Indiana Islamic Center will be hosting an anniversary dinner on December 10, 2017, at the Avalon Manor in Merrillville, Indiana.

In the early 1990's, a small group of the Muslim population in Northwest Indiana decided to purchase property in the area with a vision to provide a spiritual home for its members, offering religious education and a place for prayer, worship, and community services. The original structure, completed in 1992, was quickly outgrown as the membership grew. In 1999, a new prayer hall and community center were completed. Today, the center is home to over one hundred families, and Friday prayer services are attended by more than three hundred individuals. The Northwest Indiana Islamic Center provides numerous activities and services, accommodating Muslim and non-Muslim individuals and families throughout