

it. The organization combined with several other service-oriented groups over the years to better serve its constituency of women in need while continuing to offer low-cost, women-friendly counseling and support services. Today, the Women's Center, based out of Ann Arbor, Michigan, builds on this legacy, offering divorce support, job coaching, personal counseling, and other services through its staff of social workers, graduate interns and community volunteers. Collectively, these individuals help the Women's Center provide direct services to approximately 500 individuals each year, as well as referral services to over 1,000 other individuals to access additional community resources.

The assistance provided by the staff and volunteers of the Women's Center provides professional services that build confidence, strengthen connections and create positive energy. Women find a network and gain access at a low affordable cost to therapists, job coaches, legal aid, divorce specialists, financial advisors and other important tools they need for support and success. The Women's Center's unique approach and comprehensive resources have empowered countless women to address issues in a confidential and specialized setting, and it is my hope that the Center continues to build on its legacy of success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Women's Center of Southeastern Michigan on its 17th annual Swing into Spring fundraiser. The Women's Center offers important services and supports to women in need.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL ROOFING WEEK

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA) headquartered in Rosemont, Illinois, and its efforts to designate the week of June 4–10, 2017 as National Roofing Week.

The roof is one of the most important components of any home or business. It is the first line of defense against natural elements, such as rain, snow or wind, and yet it is often taken for granted until it falls into disrepair. National Roofing Week honors the thousands of roofing contractors and roofing-related businesses across the country and the industry's commitment to public service. National Roofing Week is a valuable reminder of the significance quality roofing has on every home and business in the United States.

Established in 1886, NRCA is one of the nation's oldest trade associations and the voice of professional roofing contractors worldwide. Today, the NRCA has more than 3,800 members located across all 50 states and represents a variety of industry stakeholders, including roofing, roof deck, and water proofing contractors. Using its vast network of roofing contractors and industry-related members, NRCA is responsible for the installation of a majority of new construction and replacement

roof systems on commercial and residential structures in America. Most of its members are small, privately-held businesses that provide high-paying jobs for thousands of hard-working families and individuals that are the backbone of our economy.

Professional roofing contractors provide vital services to their communities, both on and off the clock, in all 50 states. NRCA members will recognize National Roofing Week on June 4–10 by supporting numerous charitable community service roofing projects throughout the nation. I commend the NRCA and the vital role the organization and its members play in every community and I ask all my colleagues to join me in acknowledging their contributions during National Roofing Week.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "KEEP OUR PENSION PROMISES ACT"

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today I reintroduce the Keep Our Pension Promises Act to reinstate the long standing federal law and principal that prohibited cuts to private pension benefits in plans for retirees.

Pensions are one of the surest means to afford millions of middle class families' security in retirement. They have allowed millions of Americans to enjoy their golden years without fear that they have not saved enough. For decades, pensions guaranteed our senior citizens the peace of mind that a check would arrive every month for as long as they live: this is true retirement security.

But in December 2014, Congress uprooted this security for millions of retirees. At the last minute, in a must pass funding bill, Congress included the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA) eviscerating this protection. With little understanding of what the provisions meant, Congress changed a forty year old pension law that ensured retirees were given the highest level of pension-defense. The Employee Retirement Income Security Act, or ERISA, allowed for pension benefits in multi-employer plans to be cut only when a plan runs out of money—and even then, the retiree benefits should face cuts last. This held true because it was the right thing to do.

Pensions are not handouts, they are deferred wages earned over a lifetime of hard work. An estimated 1.5 million participants, including retirees, are in multiemployer pension plans that are in danger of running out of money in the near future. The passage of MPRA allowed for the first time, benefits of current retirees to be cut in an attempt to address the fiscal distress confronting some of these multiemployer plans.

This was wrong then, and remains a blemish on the Congressional record that little action has been taken to correct the undue burden it placed on retirees. That's why today I introduce the "Keep Our Pension Promises Act" with Senator BERNIE SANDERS of Vermont.

This Act corrects the injustices bestowed upon our most vulnerable retirees by restoring anti-cutback rules so retirees in financially troubled multiemployer pension plans are protected from having their earned benefits cut.

It will allow plans to partition off "orphaned" participants into a separate plan, giving participating employers relief from shouldering the full financial burden and risk of underfunded "orphaned" participants—ensuring the ability for plans to become financially secure once more.

This bill recognizes funding is the ultimate concern. It shores up the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp and creates a legacy fund to ensure participants in partitioned plans will continue to receive the benefits they depend upon. The costs to create this fund are covered by closing tax loopholes the very wealthy use to avoid taxes on like-kind exchanges and supersized IRA accounts that hold millions, despite laws that limit accounts to much smaller tax deductible amounts.

Further the bill ensures pension obligations are prioritized during bankruptcies, which will help the remaining employers in the plan by making it less likely they become responsible for underfunded orphan plans.

Over the past few years the retirees facing these cuts mobilized. They organized dozens of committees to spread the message of how damaging the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act has and will be to their lives and financial security. The Keep Our Pension Promises Act recognizes shared sacrifice is the appropriate course of action to save the golden years of retirement for these retirees. I encourage my colleagues to support this measure and correct the misguided action of passage of the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAYNE HOMCO FOR HER DISTINGUISHED CAREER AND WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jayne Homco for her outstanding achievements and career with Kroger Co. As president of Kroger's Michigan division, Ms. Homco's leadership and business expertise have helped make Kroger one of America's premier companies.

After graduating from Indiana University, Ms. Homco joined Kroger in 1978 and has served with the company in a variety of roles. She was named co-manager of an Indianapolis store before she turned thirty, and has held management positions with five different divisions within the company across six states. Prior to being named president of Kroger Michigan, Ms. Homco served as vice president of merchandising for Kroger's Southwest division, where she oversaw merchandising for over 200 Kroger supermarkets. In her current role, Ms. Homco leads a division of 16,000 Michigan employees across over 100 stores, which collectively account for billions of dollars in revenue each year.

Ms. Homco's pioneering career has helped her break down barriers for women in the workplace while providing outstanding leadership for Kroger Co. During her career, Ms. Homco became the first woman vice president at Kroger's Dillion's and QFC divisions. Additionally, she is active in the Michigan business community, serving as a board member of the

Michigan Chamber of Commerce and Forgotten Harvest, a hunger relief organization in Metro Detroit. Ms. Homco's ability to leverage her business experience and management skills on behalf of Michigan has helped make it a great place to live and work, and I have confidence that she will continue to lead in business and in the community in the coming years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Jayne Homco for her work with Kroger Co. and in the community. Ms. Homco has been an effective leader as President of Kroger's Michigan Division while working on behalf of the southeast Michigan community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PAY EQUITY FOR ALL ACT OF 2017

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Pay Equity for All Act of 2017, a bill that will help eliminate the gender and racial pay gap by prohibiting employers from asking job applicants for their salary history before making a job or salary offer. Representatives ROSA DELAUNO, JERROLD NADLER, and JACKIE SPEIER are original cosponsors of the bill. Even though many employers may not intentionally discriminate against applicants or employees based on gender, race or ethnicity, setting wages based on salary history can reinforce the wage gap. Members of historically disadvantaged groups often start out their careers with unfair and artificially low wages compared to their white male counterparts, and the disparities are compounded from job to job throughout their careers.

Our bill will ensure that applicants' salaries are based on their skills and merit, not on a potentially problematic salary history, by assessing penalties against employers who ask applicants for their salary history during the interview process or as a condition of employment. It would also provide job applicants and employees with a private right of action against employers who violate these provisions.

Although the wage gap has decreased for some women, it still persists for women and men of color with similar skill sets. There is much work to be done to address the wage gap for everyone, and our bill is just one step toward that goal.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING THE DEDICATED SERVICE AND SELFLESS SACRIFICE OF STAFF SERGEANT MARK R. DE ALENCAR

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with both profound sadness and deep gratitude that I rise to pay tribute to a fallen decorated American

hero. On April 8, 2017, Staff Sergeant Mark R. De Alencar, who was assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, tragically succumbed to injuries received from small arms fire in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. Staff Sgt. De Alencar was 37 years old, but lived a lifetime marked by and full of service.

Born in a U.S. Army hospital in Nuremberg, Germany, Staff Sgt. De Alencar's childhood followed his father's military career. Graduating from Joppatowne High School, Joppa, Maryland, in 1998, he then worked odd jobs before becoming a carpenter. But it was in 2009, that he choose to follow in his father's footsteps and joined the U.S. Army.

After attending Basic Combat Training and Cannon Crewmember (13B) Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Staff Sgt. De Alencar was assigned to Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

After arrival, he was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. Staff Sgt. De Alencar later attended Ranger School, graduated, and re-classed as an Infantryman (11B). During his time at Schofield Barracks, he served as Fire Team Leader, Rifle Squad Leader, and attended multiple training events with partnered forces throughout the Pacific; including Australian Jungle Operations, Operation Cobra Gold in Thailand, and multiple rotations to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California.

In September 2016, Staff Sgt. De Alencar graduated from the Special Operations Qualification Course earning the qualification as a Weapons Sergeant (18B) and was assigned to Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) located at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

Staff Sgt. De Alencar's military education includes Basic Leaders Course, Advanced Leaders Course, Jungle Operations Course, Ranger School, Airborne School, Air Assault School, Special Forces Qualification Course, and Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape School.

Staff Sgt. De Alencar's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal with two Campaign Stars, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Non Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, B Badge, and the Drivers Badge.

As exemplified by his extraordinary heroism, Staff Sgt. De Alencar's life stands as a testament that freedom is not free, and his legacy will echo in time as an example of the ultimate sacrifice made in the name of freedom On behalf of a humble and grateful Nation, I hope the De Alencar family will find solace in knowing their support, love, and counsel helped make him the hero he became both in uniform and as a father. I pray that God will be with Mark's wife, Natasha; sons, Rodrigo and Marcos; stepson, Deshaun; daughter,

Tatiana; stepdaughter, Octavia and all their family and friends during this time of great mourning and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

IN RECOGNITION OF KEN FISCHER FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2017

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ken Fischer for his 30 years as President of the University of Michigan's University Musical Society. Under Mr. Fischer's leadership, UMS has become one of the leading performing arts organizations in the country, brought some of the world's top performers and artists to the University of Michigan, and provided unparalleled cultural and artistic opportunities at the University and to the southeast Michigan community.

Mr. Fischer has been the President of UMS since 1987. During these years, Mr. Fischer has helped the UMS grow and expand its artistic offerings to the wider southeast Michigan community by attracting world-class performers to UMS, including the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, UMS has partnered with local communities to expand access to the arts. He has done extensive work with metro Detroit's Arab American community, which launched a multiyear program to showcase art from different regions and cultures. Under Mr. Fischer's direction, UMS has also commissioned many new works, sponsored artist residences, and organized collaborative performances with local, national and international artists.

Mr. Fischer's outstanding tenure has positioned UMS for success in the coming years. In addition to introducing new programs and expanding the organization's outreach to students and new members of the southeast Michigan community, Mr. Fischer has also grown the organization's development efforts to support these new initiatives. Since appointing Mr. Fischer as President, UMS's budget has increased fourfold, allowing it to reach new audiences. Mr. Fischer has also worked to further intercultural understanding by serving as a speaker and cultural ambassador to Brazil, China, Lithuania and Mexico under the direction of the U.S. State Department. Because of Mr. Fischer's outstanding leadership for three decades, UMS was chosen as a 2014 recipient of the National Medal of the Arts, which is awarded by the President of the United States to organizations that have demonstrated artistic excellence.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ken Fischer for his 30 years of success as President of the University of Michigan's University Musical Society. Mr. Fischer talent and passion for the arts has built a world-class organization that offers access to artistic performances to a variety of audiences.