

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ON THE RETIREMENT OF BRIAN C. COOPER FROM THE HOUSE PARLIAMENTARIAN'S OFFICE

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise as both the Dean of the House and as a former employer of Brian Cooper to congratulate him on his impending retirement from the House of Representatives after 35 years of service, and to thank him for his years of dedicated service to the House.

Brian is a Baltimore native and the youngest of seven children of his parents Dolores and Ellsworth Cooper. Brian loves the Charm City so much that he has lived in the same house his whole life.

He is a proud graduate of Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore (the very same high school attended by Supreme Court Justice and civil rights icon Thurgood Marshall). After high school Brian received a scholarship to the Community College of Baltimore, now known as Baltimore City Community College, where he received his degree in commercial and graphic arts.

Brian's first Capitol Hill job began in the fall of 1982 when he began work in the stock room for Publications and Distribution Services. Thereafter, in the 1980s and early 1990s, Brian worked for the House Post Office, the House document room, the Small Business Committee and the Government Operations Committee. At Government Operations, Brian served under both Jack Brooks and myself as Chair (the latter from 1991 through 1994). In that capacity Brian worked as staff assistant, handled filing and archiving of committee materials, and prepared documents for committee hearings and markups. I can personally testify that Brian's work was respected and appreciated by Members on both sides of the aisle.

In 1995, Brian joined the Office of the House Parliamentarian as Clerk where he spent a full 22 years, rising to become Chief Clerk to the Parliamentarian in 2009. Brian's most visible duties included assisting presiding officers during sessions of the House and handling timekeeping and legislative paperwork at the rostrum. In addition, Brian provided invaluable assistance in creating the first office computer network, supervising House pages, and preparing for joint meetings and joint sessions. It is no understatement to say that Brian observed and participated in a great swath of American political history during that time period.

Brian remains active in many artistic endeavors—including watercolor, oils, photography, and architectural design—which I understand he plans to continue in his retirement. Brian also plans to use his well-deserved retirement to travel to Italy and spend more time with family (including his many nieces and nephews).

As a devoted Baltimore sports fan, Brian has enjoyed the highs and suffered the lows

of the local teams. He is a particularly avid fan of the Baltimore Orioles, and I am sure he appreciates the good start they are off to this year.

I know from personal experience and observation that Brian is the consummate professional. Members and staff on both sides of the aisle know Brian to be committed to an orderly and accurate legislative process observed in a fair, nonpartisan manner. In this age of increasing polarization and legislative gridlock, Brian is a committed institutionalist. He is the rare individual consistently striving to continue the customs and traditions of the House, and committed to pass on his institutional knowledge to his successors.

The House and the Congress will greatly miss Brian's services, but we will greatly benefit from his work and legacy.

MEMORIAL DAY 2017

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives in the defense of freedom and to preserve the liberties that we hold dear in this nation.

Every Memorial Day, our nation unites to remember our military heroes who have paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend the values and freedoms we all cherish. This day of remembrance represents why so many people in our country are grateful to be Americans. No other nation has sacrificed so much to secure not only its freedom, but that of other nations.

As we reflect on the remarkable lives of our nation's fallen soldiers and their families, we must continue to honor them each and every day, as a single day of commemoration is far short of what they deserve. I know that back home in my district, our community will do their part in carrying on the legacy of these selfless individuals.

The Granbury community will host their sixth annual "Field of Flags," which is a memorial of over a thousand flags flying along Highway 377 and is dedicated to the lives of those that were killed in action or that are still missing in action. As we attend Memorial Day events like the "Field of Flags" this weekend, it is imperative to teach younger generations about the sacrifices these people made in order for us to live by the values that founded this nation.

May God bless our men and women serving today and in days past, may He comfort those who endure the pain of loss, and may He never cease to shed his grace on Texas and this great nation.

ALEXANDER ESCALANTE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexander Escalante for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Alexander Escalante is a student at Pomona High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexander Escalante is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alexander Escalante for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE BACKPACK BUDDIES FOUNDATION OF LOUDOUN

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun, a local organization that aims to ensure that all children and students not only receive food during the week at school but also on weekends. Recently, this organization donated \$41,000 to 18 groups across Loudoun County that support backpack buddy programs, including churches, schools, PTAs, and food pantries.

My constituent, Mr. Daniel Hampton, founded the Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun in 2014, and at the time the organization served two schools and approximately 275 kids. This school year, still under his leadership, 82 schools and over 3,600 students participated in backpack buddies programs. While this is an excellent testament to the organization's growth, it also speaks to the amount of students that often go without food on weekends, and I am thankful that organizations, like Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun, exist to help combat this issue.

Each year, the organization raises money for Backpack Buddy programs across Northern Virginia, yet this year marked a new fundraising record. The \$41,000 raised allowed for the organization to disperse funds to 18 grant recipients in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$15,000, helping students all across Loudoun County. Most of the funds were raised at their

● 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.

annual Friendsgiving Dinner. However, they also host several other fundraisers and events throughout the year in their effort to support this important cause. While the organization is thrilled with this year's fundraising initiatives and grant program, they hope that next year they will be able to help even more children in Northern Virginia. The organization's leadership in ensuring that every student of Loudoun County is properly fed and taken care of is truly exemplary, and I appreciate their ambition in support of our most needy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me and countless others in thanking Backpack Buddies Foundation of Loudoun for their continuous efforts to aid our students who are in need. I am extremely grateful for the impact this organization has had on Virginia's 10th District and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia, and I look forward to speaking of its continued success in the future.

HONORING MELVIN MATTHEWS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Reverend Melvin Matthews.

Reverend Melvin Matthews was formally installed on May 22, 2016 at Bell Grove Missionary Baptist Church, making him the first new pastor since 1951 when his uncle, Reverend David Matthews, accepted the leadership role.

The elder David Matthews, a well-known spiritual and civic leader in Indianola, served the historic church for 65 years prior to his death on April 15, 2015, at 95.

The younger Matthews said, "I pray that God will use me to continue the great legacy of excellence started by Pastor Matthews 65 years ago."

Matthews grew up in Indianola and in Bell Grove Church, graduated from Gentry High School and Mississippi Valley State University before enlisting and becoming a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. After retiring from the service, he settled in Warner Robbins, GA, where he served as assistant pastor of the New Jerusalem Baptist Church, and youth minister, associate minister, education minister and economic development minister at the Fellowship Bible Baptist Church.

Since his return to Indianola in 2009, Mr. Matthews has served as assistant to the pastor, David Matthews, teaching the church's Thursday night Bible study.

Matthews has received his Bachelor of Theology degree and is scheduled to graduate from Abundant Blessings Theological Seminary on June 11 with his master's degree in theology.

Matthews's church, Bell Grove was organized as a "brush arbor" in 1868 in a location described as: "Just across the railroad, on the corner, facing Indian Bayou across the street from the site of the old Mississippi Power and Light office." Down through the years, the church has experienced numerous strides and setbacks, including: being burned down twice, three other locations prior to the present spot on B.B. King Road, and the drowning of its first pastor on record, Rev. James Wright who was made pastor in 1878.

Since then, several moves included: comprising location on donated land "on the hill" on Adair Street and from there to its location on Chandler Street, where the church experienced major improvements under the leadership of Rev. E.G. Mason and elder Matthews.

Reverend David Matthews led the congregation from the corner of Hannah and Chandler to their present location on B.B. King Road in March 2006, where he continued to lead and inspire until his death. The younger Matthews stated, "With God's help, Bell Grove will be a Bible believing, Bible teaching and Bible preaching church with a great commitment to the 'Great Commandment and Great Commission,' knowing that God will use this to build a 'Great Church.'"

During the 13-month interim since Rev. David Matthews' passing, the Rev. E.T. Goodman of Greenwood, a retired former pastor of Mt. Beulah Baptist Church in Indianola, conducted the morning worship services and Bible study.

Reverend Melvin Matthews is the son of Missouri Gray Matthews and the late Rev. John Matthews and is married to the former Cynthia Williams Matthews of Goulds, FL.

He often reminds people never say what you won't do because God has a way of changing your plans. He always said there were three things he would never do: preach, teach and return to Mississippi. God fixed it so he had to do all three.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Reverend Melvin Matthews for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

ALEXANDER FERNANDEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexander Fernandez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Alexander Fernandez is a student at Arvada K-8 School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexander Fernandez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alexander Fernandez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

AIKEN CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. TREY GOWDY

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Mr. GOWDY. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following Proclamation in honor of Aiken Chapel

Missionary Baptist Church, for their 100th Anniversary:

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church was formed in 1915 by a group of fourteen men and women who purchased land from Mrs. Ida Aiken to build a church; and

Whereas, the church was named for Mrs. Aiken and became Aiken Chapel Church, pastored by the late Reverend R. L. Goodwin, a founding member; and

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church continues to be a leading church in Taylors, South Carolina, and under the leadership of Dr. W. O. Harrison Sr., pastor for more than thirty years, the congregation continues to be active and enthusiastic members of our community; and

Whereas, Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year and this anniversary celebration will draw members from the Upstate community to participate in this momentous milestone in the history of their church; Now therefore, be it

Resolved that I, TREY GOWDY, do congratulate the members of Aiken Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in recognition of their 100th Anniversary and thank them for their unwavering commitment, dedication, and contributions to Greenville County and to the Fourth Congressional District of South Carolina.

HONORING BLUEINK TECHNOLOGIES

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a dynamic and promising New Mexico company, Bluelnk Technologies.

Just over two years ago, Faze Sharif and Zach Lovelady founded Bluelnk with the aim to modernize the authenticity of eSignatures. Before computers, documents had to be signed in blue ink to signify authenticity. However, things are not so simple anymore. Sharif and Lovelady understood that the way we execute documents needed to evolve to keep up with the fast-paced business world in which fraud, misunderstanding, and mistakes cost businesses and consumers billions each year. Bluelnk's innovative software ensures that documents are reviewed and executed in a fully customizable and transparent manner.

Bluelnk's document review system can be configured to give signatories either a quick overview or detailed step-by-step review of a document's terms in any language and on any device. This guarantees that documents are reviewed according to a signatory's preferences in a manner most convenient to that individual. Additionally, Bluelnk provides powerful fraud prevention and security measures that create a detailed audit trail of every event throughout the review and signing and uses cutting edge technologies to verify a signer's identity. These technologies include GPS and IP based geo-location, photo identification, SMS text codes and driver's license scans—all of which are memorialized after execution in a stand-alone document called the Bluelnk Certificate of Evidence. The Certificate of Evidence creates almost irrefutable proof of execution to prevent contract disputes before they