

Moss. Sergeant Moss is an inspiration and deserves to be honored. I know Sergeant Moss and his fellow soldiers did not all receive the return they truly deserved. So for Sergeant Moss and others, welcome home and thank you.

Humbly, I echo the words of President Ronald Reagan, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free." And humbly, I offer my sincere gratitude to Sergeant Joe Moss for his service and acts of bravery that allow us the freedoms we enjoy today.

#### OPPOSITION OF U.S. WITHDRAWAL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

##### HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in opposition to President Trump's misguided decision to withdraw America from the Paris Climate Agreement. This agreement, which was negotiated and signed by President Obama, was a strong step in the right direction to combat climate change. The deal developed goals to reduce carbon pollution by increasing energy efficiency and investing in energy research and development.

Joining Syria and Nicaragua, the United States is now one of three countries not participating in this groundbreaking pact of 195 nations. With this decision, President Trump has chosen to relinquish America's position as a leader in global environmental policy and thus, forfeits the United States from technological advancements and solar jobs that would drive our global economic growth. To retreat from the world stage gives other countries, such as China and Russia, the opportunity to gain universal influence.

Moreover, President Trump's decision to break America's promise on energy commitment with no plan in place to reduce our carbon footprint jeopardizes our progress toward a more sustainable energy future. Because of the lack of leadership in the White House, citizens across our nation must rely on city and state officials to lead their communities in an effort to combat climate change.

More than 200 mayors from around the United States have joined the Mayors National Climate Action Agenda to adopt, honor, and uphold the commitments to the goals enshrined in the Paris Agreement as well as strengthen local efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I am proud to say that Birmingham Mayor William Bell has joined this initiative.

Our constituents deserve a responsible energy strategy that meets our obligation to protect the environment for future generations. This strategy should also include a proposed plan to eradicate environmental injustice, an issue that affects many Americans today, including citizens of my district.

For example, Perry County is a largely African American community in Alabama where coal ash from around the country is dumped. Time and time again, we see that communities of color, as well as the poor, are burdened with the negative health outcomes that stem from exposure to pollution and industrial waste.

America deserves a President that will work to establish an energy policy that will position the United States as an energy independent country that also leads the world toward a sustainable future.

#### HONORING DR. KARI MOE

##### HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the public service of Kari Moe, my Chief of Staff for over 10 years.

When I was first elected to Congress, many of my friends and colleagues said the one thing I had to do was hire a great Chief of Staff. Kari has been more than great—she has been irreplaceable.

Kari Moe met my personal hero and a mentor, Senator Paul Wellstone, when she was a freshman at Carleton College, where he was a professor. When the college's conservative administration moved not to renew Senator Wellstone's contract in 1975, Kari organized campus protests to grant him tenure. Kari and her fellow activists were victorious, and Wellstone was granted tenure.

That event marked the beginning of a long and successful career in organizing and leadership. Soon after graduating, she moved to Chicago to work for another personal hero, Harold Washington, the city's first black Mayor.

After Paul Wellstone won his Senate race in 1990, he called Kari to ask her to join his team in D.C. As Senator Wellstone's Chief, she helped achieve many progressive victories and helped develop staffers with her signature nurturing leadership style.

Kari has exceeded all expectations in her role as lead staffer for my office. She has, perhaps more than anyone, shaped my Congressional career. She helped us serve the 5th Congressional District, advance our policy agenda, and build the work of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. We have worked together every step of the way and I have appreciated her leadership. I will miss her and know she will continue to advance our agenda in her future work with young leaders.

She will be remembered in my office for her strength, empathy and leadership, always urging staff to act with purpose, and to remember that real change doesn't come from the top—it comes from empowering people at the grass roots.

I thank her for her service and will miss her in my office.

#### RECOGNIZING MIKE CHRISTOPHER ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 40 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

##### HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mike Christopher, a devoted public servant in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Mike is retiring after 40 years of dedicated public service as supervisor of Washington Township.

Mike was born March 18, 1952 and graduated from Penn State University in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environment Resource Management. He married his wife Andrea on May 15, 1976, and began working for Washington Township the next year as Supervisor. In 1993, Mike began serving as the Township Treasurer as well as Supervisor.

Mike is one of those outstanding individuals who is a true public servant, Mr. Speaker, and he didn't stop with working for his local community full time. He's served on numerous boards and committees in the Waynesboro area and Franklin County including the YMCA Board of Directors and Building Committee, as President of the Greater Waynesboro Chamber of Commerce, and as Secretary for the Waynesboro Area Drug Education Consortium. He is also the founder of the Franklin County Crime Solvers Board.

I am certainly not the first to recognize Mike for his outstanding service. In addition to much recognition throughout his career, just this year he was awarded the Chairman's Distinguished Service Award at the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors 95th Annual Conference in Hershey.

Mr. Speaker, Mike's willingness to serve his community and Pennsylvania sets him apart as an outstanding individual and I am honored to represent him in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Mike on his retirement and wishing him nothing but continued success.

#### MICKAYLA CUNNINGHAM

##### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

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

Mickayla Cunningham is a student at Arvada K-8 School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Mickayla Cunningham 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 Mickayla Cunningham for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF BALDOMERO VELA SR

##### HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of prominent Rio

Grande Valley businessman, Baldomero Vela Sr., who passed away on Friday, June 2, 2017.

Baldomero, or “Baldo,” as he was known to friends and family, was born and raised in Hidalgo, Texas. After graduating from McAllen High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944, serving in the 29th Infantry Division during World War II. He then attended the University of Texas at Austin, graduating in 1949 with a degree in pharmaceuticals.

Following graduation, Baldo was a pharmacist for 50 years in the Rio Grande Valley. In 1957, Baldo opened the Professional Pharmacy in McAllen, Texas. In the 1970s, he purchased Lee's Pharmacy, which is now owned and operated by two of his five children. In addition to his role as a pharmacist, Baldo was deeply involved in a number of community organizations, including the Hidalgo Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, McAllen Public Utilities Board and McAllen Housing Services.

Baldomero will be remembered as a kind and generous man, whose contributions to his community will not be easily forgotten. His generous spirit will live on in the Rio Grande Valley, leaving those he loved better for having known him.

Mr. Speaker, South Texas lost a strong community member this month. He embodied the values of diligence, selflessness, and service. He will be sorely missed.

**HONORING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STEPHANIE BARBER GETER AS SHE RECEIVES THE MEDGAR EVERS AWARD FROM THE BUFFALO BRANCH OF THE NAACP**

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stephanie Barber Geter, recipient of The Medgar Evers Award at the NAACP—Buffalo Chapter's Medgar Evers Dinner. Ms. Geter has dedicated much of her life to serving others, especially the people of Western New York. She has left a lasting impact on our community by putting others before herself and combining her skills with compassion to improve the lives of others.

Ms. Geter served as Senior Vice President of Funds Distribution & Community Initiatives at the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County. In this role, she distributed approximately \$25 million annually to agency providers and community partners which played a vital role in community development within Western New York. Ms. Geter's tireless work for the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County has improved the quality of life of countless members of our community, and presented so many individuals with opportunities they would not have had without her.

The extensive background in community service Ms. Geter possesses speaks volumes to her drive to make a positive impact on the world. She has experience working in the legislative service branch of government, neighborhood housing programs and youth job services. Ms. Geter has served diligently on numerous non-profit boards, community and government committees and oversight groups as well.

Currently, Ms. Geter works at Buffalo State College as Director of the Head Start Partnership. As Director, she is a mentor and teacher to Head Start teachers who go on to help children. In addition, Ms. Geter serves as the President of the Hamlin Park Taxpayers Association, Board Chair of Restoring Our Community Coalition, Board Chair of Elim Community Corporation, and is on the Board of the WNY Food Bank. As the Board Chair of Restoring Our Community Coalition, she has used her leadership to revitalize neighborhoods along Humboldt Parkway in Buffalo, NY. Ms. Geter has worked with Elim Community Corporation, a bible-based ministry that offers worship to many in our community. In her role on the Board of the WNY Food Bank, Ms. Geter organized and helped provide services vital to the people of Western New York. The impacts of her work can be seen in many different forms. While Ms. Geter has been involved in many different causes and organizations, one constant is her devotion to people in Western New York.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the time to recognize the remarkable work Ms. Stephanie Geter has done for the Western New York Community. Ms. Geter has truly dedicated her life to helping the people of Buffalo & Erie County. Stephanie's devotion to serving others is admirable and I would like to congratulate her on receiving the Medgar Evers Award.

**EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR ROBERT LEE SIMMONS II**

**HON. MAC THORNBERRY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express appreciation for the work of Robert Lee Simmons II, Staff Director of the House Armed Services Committee. True confession—I don't like goodbyes, and I'm not very good at them. So I wrote down a few things I want to say and then will yield to others.

Bob Simmons has been a superb leader of the House Armed Services Committee staff for 12 years, across four chairmen. That longevity and continued confidence in him as chairmen come and go, as Committee members come and go, as the challenges that our military and our country face come and too often stay, is pretty remarkable, especially in the business we are in.

I would say his greatest achievement is that he assembled, led, and inspired an outstanding group of people to give their best for our country through not only changing security challenges, but through changing political environments. And he has always operated in light of the unique responsibilities that the Constitution places on Congress as a separate, independent branch of government. Our system is messy, difficult, usually inefficient—as Churchill said, it “is the worst form of government except for all of the others that have ever been tried.”

Over the years, Bob has spent the hours, incurred the headaches, the time in the car, the frustrations of dealing with knucklehead Members like me with the next great idea. And he has done all of that with patience and a

cheerful disposition—usually. He has made this Committee, and helped make this Congress and this system of government, work. And our nation has benefited.

I believe that there is nothing more noble to which men and women can devote their lives than to the protection of their fellow citizens and the security of our nation. Bob Simmons has devoted his life to that cause, first in industry, then with us, now back to industry. But it has always been the same cause. And the guiding light has always been what's the right thing to do for our country, and for the men and women who serve it.

Everyone who serves in jobs like these does so at some sacrifice to family. And so I want to thank Donna and Rob for sharing Bob with us these 12 years and for understanding the missed anniversaries and birthdays. We were on quite a roll there for a while.

On behalf of the men and women who have been privileged enough to serve in this room at some point over the past 12 years, we are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with Bob, for what you have done for us, and for all you have done for that most noble cause.

**HONORING CAPTAIN JERRY LYNN TATE**

**HON. JEB HENSARLING**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 8, 2017*

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Captain Jerry Lynn Tate for his courageous service to our country. While Captain Tate enjoys his retirement in Mabank, Texas, his exemplary military career leaves a far-reaching legacy of true, American exceptionalism.

Captain Tate joined the United States Army after graduating from the University of Oklahoma's Army ROTC. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in January of 1967.

Upon basic training and studies, Captain Tate was an instructor in the Armor School of Topographic Studies at Fort Knox. He went on to earn his Army Aviator Wings and received 18 Air Medals for meritorious achievement while participating in flight support for combat ground forces throughout the Republic of Vietnam. As a pilot as well as an instructor in the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk, Captain Tate flew 945 hours and 315 missions in combat. He also received both the 1,000 and 2,000 hour plaque from Grumman Aerospace, commemorating his accident-free flying hours. There is no doubt that Captain Tate saved countless lives during his outstanding service to our country.

His acts of bravery were commemorated with many awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal. Upon his release from active duty as an instructor pilot and flight commander at Fort Rucker, Captain Tate went on to have a successful career as a pilot for Delta Air Lines for 33 years.

Humbly, I echo the words of President Ronald Reagan, “We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we will always be free.” And humbly, I offer my sincere gratitude to Captain Jerry Lynn Tate for his service and acts of bravery that allow us the freedoms we enjoy today.