

Treatment Services Court, and Chairman of the Memorial Day Parade committee. He is also active in Honor Guard, Color Guard, and other veteran organizations. In addition to his work with veterans' groups, he serves as a community sports advocate and official.

Mr. Albright is the son of a World War II and Korean War veteran, and he has inspired his son and grandson to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Len Albright for his dedication and service.

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR  
BENJAMIN C. PALACIOS

**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of an outstanding Soldier and a very dear friend, retired Command Sergeant Major Benjamin C. Palacios who passed away on November 9, 2018.

Affectionately known as Ben, Command Sergeant Major Palacios was born on November 11, 1950 on the island of Saipan in the Northern Marianas. He later moved to Guam where he graduated from George Washington High School and was drafted into the United States Army in 1969.

Ben spent the next thirty-four years in exemplary service in the Army as an armor Soldier. His duties have included diverse assignments ranging from Tank Commander to Command Sergeant Major of some of the premier organizations in the United States military. He served as the Operations Sergeant in several Armor Battalions including an assignment as a Senior Enlisted Advisor for the 50th Armored Division, New Jersey Army National Guard in 1988. In 1991, Ben deployed to Saudi Arabia in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm as the 3-69 Armor Battalion Command Sergeant Major. In 1994, Ben served as the Brigade Command Sergeant Major for the 2nd Vanguard Brigade in the 24th Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia, and in 1996 he was selected to be the 24th Infantry Division Command Sergeant Major. Following this assignment Ben served as the Command Sergeant Major for the Third Mobile Armored Corps at Fort Hood in Texas and was subsequently selected to serve as the United States Army Forces Command's Command Sergeant Major in July 1998. Ben's illustrious Army career culminated in one of the most prestigious assignments as the command sergeant major of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, United States Forces Korea and 8th United States Army in the Republic of South Korea.

On his retirement in 2003, the Republic of South Korea awarded Command Sergeant Major Palacios the Order of National Security Merit Gwanbok Medal on behalf of the President of South Korea. Ben was the first enlisted soldier to receive this prestigious medal since the end of the Korean War.

Ben's most prestigious awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Republic of Korea Order of National Security (Gwangbok) Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and

Meritorious Service Medal. Some of these he was awarded more than once.

Since 2003 Ben has remained engaged in Guam and the Pacific region working for companies associated with improving the United States security posture and contributing to the local community. One of his most devoted efforts was as a member of my Veterans Advisory Council which I founded to assist my advocacy on behalf of veterans residing in Guam. His dedication and personal efforts at improving services, support, and benefits for the U.S. military veterans living on Guam was greatly appreciated and a welcome improvement to the quality of life of all veterans.

I appreciated his warm, welcoming and inclusive approach to serving our veterans and everyone he engages.

I will miss Ben and his ever-optimistic attitude. I extend my deepest condolences to his wife of 45 years Estella Kosaka Palacios, and his sons; Benjamin, Bryan, Bradley, Brent, and their families.

Rest in peace my friend.

TRIBUTE TO BENNETT "BEN"  
DRAKE

**HON. KEN CALVERT**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Riverside County farming and water leader Bennett "Ben" Drake, who passed away on Wednesday, November 7, 2018. Ben served the people of Riverside County in many ways throughout his life and he will be deeply missed.

Ben was born in Riverside, California on July 8, 1949, to Richard and Martha Drake. Ben was a graduate of Fresno State University and also a member of Class XII of the California Agricultural Leadership Program. Ben was a fifth generation farmer in Riverside County and a resident of Temecula since 1973. Ben founded Drake Enterprises, Inc., a farm management company 40 years ago. They manage 750 acres of avocados and 450 acres of winegrapes in the Temecula Valley. Ben served as past President of the Temecula Valley Winegrape Growers Association and past Chairman of the California Association of Winegrape Growers.

As a prominent farmer and water advocate, Ben played a significant role in the successful growth of the Temecula Valley Wine Country. In the 1990's, an outbreak of Pierce's Disease threatened to wipe out grape vineyards throughout the region and state. As I witnessed first-hand, Ben's leadership during the crisis made a tremendous impact and resulted in a coordinated response from local, state and federal agencies that ultimately saved the region from devastation. Ben was elected to serve on the Rancho California Water District's Board of Directors in September, 2001, and faithfully served on the Board for 17 years. For all of his many accomplishments Ben was named California Association of Winegrape Growers Leader of the Year 2013; Boy Scouts Distinguished Citizen of the Year 2014; Riverside County 4H All Star; and received the Robert M. Howie Award for Outstanding Service to Riverside Agriculture 2010.

Ben is survived by his wife of 43 years, Sharon (Clark) Drake and his children Katie (Drake) and JD Harkey, Chase Drake, Kourtney Drake, Kara (Drake) and MacLain Atkinson. I want to extend my heartfelt condolences to the entire Drake family, his friends, and everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him. Although Ben may be gone, the many contributions he made in Riverside County will have a lasting impact.

CONGRATULATING JOHN  
NICHOLAS "NICKY" SMITH

**HON. JAMES COMER**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate John Nicholas "Nicky" Smith, Mayor of Albany in the 1st District of Kentucky, on his retirement from public office and offer my best wishes as he focuses on doing what he enjoys most—spending time with his loved ones.

As a staunch advocate for the citizens of Albany throughout his tenure, Mayor Smith secured over \$27 million in grants and loans to improve the livelihood of each of his neighbors through improvements to downtown infrastructure and the expansion of vital community services. His leadership on Area Development District Boards of Directors and his chairmanship and involvement with multiple community boards and committees during his career are a testament to his fervent spirit and lifelong commitment to bettering those around him.

I join with his family and friends as well as all those who have benefited from his efforts to wish him the best in this new chapter of his life. I am grateful for his steadfast leadership and profound influence on countless residents of the 1st District of Kentucky.

HONORING JERRY WHITE

**HON. LUKE MESSER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a former longtime member of my staff, Jerry White, for his work in my office and his service to our state.

Jerry started on our team during my first term in Congress, serving as my Deputy Chief of Staff in Washington, D.C. and later as the Staff Director of the Republican Policy Committee. During his time in our office, he advised me on a variety of policy issues, developed and wrote numerous bills, and managed the Republican Policy Committee. Since leaving our office, Jerry has gone on to serve as the Legislative Director for Rep. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS and now works as the Policy Director for the House Republican Conference.

On a personal note, Jerry and I share a love of the life lessons of sports and a commitment to putting family first in our life. Jerry has been my advisor, but more importantly, I consider Jerry my friend.

I wish Jerry continued success in all that God has planned for him and his family. I

have no doubt Jerry's biggest impact on our nation is yet to come. I look forward to cheering Jerry on in those efforts.

RECOGNIZING JOHN ALEX FOR  
THE 2018 MONTANA CONGRES-  
SIONAL VETERAN COMMENDA-  
TION

**HON. GREG GIANFORTE**

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John Alex of Libby, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Alex served his country in the United States Air Force for more than two decades, including service in the Vietnam War. Beginning his career in 1953, he retired a Senior Master Sergeant in 1976, working as an Aircraft Jet Engine Maintenance Superintendent.

Mr. Alex's leadership and dedication to the community is evident through his many years of service at area schools as an administrator and school board member.

On Veterans Day, Mr. Alex proudly speaks to area students about his 23-year military career. According to Libby resident and school-teacher Chrys Marchant, "He makes everyone feel welcome and valuable in all situations."

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending John Alex for his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the chamber on Monday, December 10, 2018. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on roll call votes 426 and 427.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICHARD  
CLINE

**HON. JACKIE SPEIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Richard Cline as he concludes his service on the City Council of Menlo Park. He leaves a record of passionate commitment to the priorities of housing, transportation and education.

A few years ago, as the economy was finally recovering, Councilman Cline and I visited a large development for seniors. It sits on a main entrance to the Belle Haven neighborhood. Sequoia Belle Haven offers 90 deeply discounted apartments to seniors, plus amenities such as organized events and access to public transit. It is a model that reflects the commitment of the entire city to its elderly, low income population. Councilman Cline was very proud, and rightfully so. As a member of the

council, he knew many long-time Menlo Park residents who would benefit by moving to this new development.

He was also very enthusiastic about building housing at the site of an abandoned school located in Menlo Park. It appears that the district and the city have agreed that this would be a good site for faculty/staff housing, and that the site has since been cleared in preparation for future development. During his 12 years on the council, he supported the revitalization of the downtown plan which included hundreds of new housing units.

In Menlo Park, parks and recreation are treasured. Councilman Cline helped guide the city council during a period of significant construction on the Burgess Campus, the passage of bonds for a sports field, and construction of an ever-expanding bike lane system.

The City of Menlo Park is blessed with exploding economic development. As a councilmember who sat on the council through the Great Recession and who had to make very painful cuts to the city's budget in order to deliver balanced budgets for 10 of his 12 years of service, Rich Cline has seen both sides of the economic cycle. He supported tiered pensions for sustainability and worked hard with his colleagues to ensure that prudent reserves were created during times when property and sales taxes rise.

He advocated for smart growth along transportation corridors and for mitigations to the Facebook development that would put housing closer to the campus, create shuttles, and potentially reactivate a rail line across the bay to reduce vehicle traffic. At some point, long-anticipated improvements to the Willow Road overcrossing will be finalized. While Rich Cline will not be on the council when the intersection is opened, his support was vital to ensuring that this community-wide benefit is implemented.

In his elections to the council, he was variously supported by the Sierra Club and labor, community leaders and businesses. Rich Cline is a pragmatist and a respectful leader, which is part of the reason that his colleagues elected him Mayor of Menlo Park on three separate occasions.

As he retires from the council to concentrate on his business and family, we want to thank his wife Julie, and their three children, Maria, Chiara and Gina, for allowing Rich to spend so much time on public affairs during these three terms on the council. He will be missed as he leaves an indelible impact on Menlo Park. His service is an excellent example of the quality of local leadership that exists in San Mateo County, and of the strength of democracy in cities throughout America.

TRIBUTE TO MARION ASHLEY

**HON. KEN CALVERT**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to our region have been exceptional. After serving 16 years on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, my good friend Marion Ashley will be stepping down.

Marion is a native of Riverside County, a member of a pioneer Perris Valley family, and

has long shown his deep commitment to the people of Riverside County. He attended local schools: Perris Union High School, Riverside City College and graduated San Diego State University with a major in Business Management. Marion spent years in the private sector as a CPA with a national accounting firm, a corporate executive, a banker, and established a real estate investment firm. He also served the public as a Riverside County Planning Commissioner from 1973 to 1981, and was elected to a serve on the Board of the Eastern Municipal Water District from 1992 to 2002.

In 2002, Marion was elected to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, where he has become a respected leader on regional issues. As a County Supervisor he oversees a budget of \$5.3 billion and sets public policy for nearly 2.4 million people. Marion's leadership has made a tremendous impact on a variety of initiatives critical to Riverside County's future, including the Riverside County Integrated Project, the Perris Valley Metrolink Line, and the construction of numerous public safety and transportation infrastructure projects. For the benefit of future generations, Marion and his family have donated hundreds of acres of land in the hills west of Perris to help create a permanent wildlife refuge and supported countless charitable causes.

Marion has contributed immensely to the betterment of our region and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and friend. To conclude, Mr. Speaker I want to thank Marion for his service to the Inland Empire—his dedication, insight and passion will be greatly missed.

RECOGNIZING HARRY ARMSTRONG  
FOR THE 2018 MONTANA CON-  
GRESSIONAL VETERAN COM-  
MENDATION

**HON. GREG GIANFORTE**

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2018*

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Harry Armstrong of Belgrade, a recipient of the 2018 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Armstrong joined the United States Marine Corps in 1964 and competed in shooting sports throughout the United States for the Marine Corps Shooting Team. He completed his 12-year active and reserve duty military career in 1976, retiring with the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Since 2014, Mr. Armstrong has served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps League Robert Ellard Detachment 1050. His passion for shooting sports has led him to open a private shooting range on his ranch for veterans to gather, talk, and in some cases, heal. On the day before Memorial Day each year, Montana veterans and their families join Harry and Louise Armstrong on their ranch where they are treated to a special day in remembrance of their fallen comrades and loved ones.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Harry Armstrong for his dedication and service.