

HONORING ROSS ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2018

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ross Elementary School in Marin County for its recognition on May 3, 2018 as a 2018 California Distinguished School by the California Department of Education. Chosen for its exemplary high performance, as measured by state and national assessments, Ross Elementary School was one of 287 schools to attain this honor statewide. This highly competitive award reflects outstanding achievement and the highest caliber of professional service, family commitment, and community engagement.

With 366 students, Ross Elementary School offers comprehensive educational programs that academically challenge and instill a joy of learning in its students while ensuring that all children have the skills and knowledge to reach their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, this hard-earned distinction reflects true community success. From the students and their families, to the staff and administrators, and the extended community, Ross Elementary School has developed an education model for the state and the nation: empowering today's students to be tomorrow's problem-solvers, inventors, and pioneers. Please join me in congratulating Ross Elementary School on this impressive achievement.

HONORING DR. SILVIA M. DIEGO

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2018

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Dr. Silvia M. Diego for receiving the John Darroch Memorial Award for Physician of the Year from the Stanislaus Medical Society; and to personally thank her for her years of service working to better the lives of residents in the Central Valley and the state of California.

Silvia Diego grew up in a small town in the San Joaquin valley as the daughter of farm worker parents. She attended Fresno State University and, with the love and support of her family, was able to receive a Bachelor of Arts in Biology in 1989. She later went on to earn her medical degree from the Stanford University School of Medicine in 1994.

After receiving her medical degree, Dr. Diego returned to the Central Valley to serve the impoverished and uninsured residents of the region. In 1996 she began working with Golden Valley Health Centers, where she would go on to serve as Clinical Director, Associate Medical Director, and as Chief Medical Officer. In 2014 she opened a private medical practice in Modesto, CA where she continues to serve disadvantaged members of the community.

Throughout her time as a physician, Dr. Silvia Diego has received numerous awards and honors. In 2009 she was appointed to the Medical Board of California, and in 2018 she

was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Faculty Award from the University of California, Davis.

Since 1998, the Stanislaus Medical Society has bestowed the John Darroch Memorial Award to physicians who demonstrate professionalism, dedication to patients, collegial support and community involvement. Dr. Diego has exemplified all of these excellent qualities throughout her medical career, and I can think of no one more deserving of this distinguished honor.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing Dr. Silvia M. Diego for her unwavering leadership, many accomplishments, and contributions on behalf of God, the community, and the Nation.

God bless her always.

TRIBUTE TO HEATHER CALKINS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2018

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Heather Calkins. She will be presented with the Begie Hefner Volunteer Award from the Salvation Army at their annual dinner on May 9, 2018.

Heather has helped for years with the week-long Christmas sign-ups for Toy Shop and helps at the shop. She is a leader in the Corps and works with one of the youth groups every Wednesday night.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Heather Calkins for receiving this outstanding award and for her continued commitment to making her community better. I am proud to represent her, and Iowans like her, in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Heather Calkins and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF
2018

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2018

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4) to reauthorize programs of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R. 4). Since 2012, Congress has been unable to pass a long-term reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). It is long overdue that we continue to ensure safe skies for the American people while also providing stability for our air traffic controllers. This legislation reauthorizes the FAA through 2023 and will offer the funding reliability needed to make improvements to our airports and air transportation infrastructure. I am also pleased that Republican Leadership abandoned their long-standing push to privatize America's air traffic control system which would have been downright fiscally irresponsible.

H.R. 4 also includes a number of amendments unrelated to FAA reauthorization. One

amendment that I support is the important disaster relief and recovery provisions that will directly help Americans in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and others around the country who remain vulnerable to natural disasters. These amendments to the Stafford Act will help communities rebuild from disasters such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and will allow Americans to better prepare for future storms. Not only will this legislation help Americans rebuild, it will save taxpayers down the road by reducing future recovery costs. While I agree with this amendment, it is disheartening that it took this long for Congress to act to give the people of disaster-struck areas the relief they need.

I do remain deeply concerned with two partisan amendments that were added to the bill on the House floor. The first amendment would pre-empt state and local laws that limit the hours a trucker can drive. This amendment is not only dangerous, but it has no business being in legislation that reauthorizes the FAA. Make no mistake, if this partisan provision is not stripped out by the Senate, truck drivers and all Americans who drive on our interstate system will be less safe.

I am also troubled by an amendment that specifically targets the makeup of the Metropolitan Council in Minnesota. The Lewis Amendment represents an alarming infringement by the Federal Government on the local transit decision-making process in the Twin Cities metro area. By requiring the Metropolitan Council to shift from a citizens' board appointed by the Governor of Minnesota to a locally elected board in order to keep its status as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), this amendment would throw transit planning for the entire Twin Cities metro area into political infighting and chaos. This amendment would stall transit planning for the metro region, significantly threaten future federal funding for Minnesota and inhibit the continued growth of our culturally diverse and economically dynamic metro area. I plan on working with Ranking Member De Fazio and my Senate counterparts to ensure that this misguided and non-germane amendment is removed in conference. I would also like to include in the RECORD an Op-Ed from The Star Tribune as well as a letter from Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, explaining why this amendment is harmful to Minnesota.

Again, I am pleased that the House of Representatives is finally able to pass this long overdue but bipartisan reauthorization of the FAA. As the 115th Congress moves forward, I hope Congressional Republicans will continue to work with Democrats to invest in America's transportation system.

STATE OF MINNESOTA,

Saint Paul, MN, April 30, 2018.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,

Senate Majority Leader,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: On April 27, 2018, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 4, FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. As the Senate prepares to take up FAA reauthorization legislation, I urge you not to include language from the House bill that would effectively end the Metropolitan Council's designation as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities region of Minnesota.

H.R. 4 will modify a statute relating to MPOs established prior to December 18, 1991, by now requiring local elected officials to

serve on their governing boards. The Metropolitan Council has consisted of governor-appointed members since 1967 and has never had elected officials serve as members. In 1973, the Metropolitan Council was designated the MPO by the governor to meet the new federal requirement, because it was already serving the purpose of an MPO before they were federally required—to ensure the coordination of land use and transportation planning. In 1974, the state legislature also designated the Metropolitan Council as MPO in Minnesota state statute. The Metropolitan Council has properly and effectively served this function for 45 years, and amendment H.R. 4 would rescind this MPO model.

In 1974, the Minnesota State Legislature also created the TAB to align more closely with federal MPO requirements and guide the Metropolitan Council's transportation funding decisions. Elected officials play a powerful role in spending federal transportation money through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). Today, the 34-member TAB consists of citizens and representatives of municipalities and counties, in fact, 18 of 34 members are elected officials. The TAB allocates the MPO's federal funds, and the Metropolitan Council's powers are limited to either concurrence or returning the decisions to TAB for reconsideration.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has grandfathered the Metropolitan Council's unique governance structure, as allowed under current law, for over 25 years. The Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration have also recently reaffirmed the Metropolitan Council's status.

I reiterate my request that the Senate exclude this damaging MPO provision from the Senate FAA reauthorization bill. Eliminating the Metropolitan Council's MPO status would trigger a lengthy redesignation process that would bring uncertainty about federally funded transportation projects in the Twin Cities, and circumvent a long-standing and productive process at a time when transportation investment is critical to our region.

Thank you for your consideration.

MARK DAYTON,
Governor.

[From Star Tribune, Apr. 26, 2018]

U.S. HOUSE APPROVES MEASURE TAKING AIM
AT MET COUNCIL
(By Eric Roper)

Rep. Jason Lewis objects to powerful regional board being nonelected.

The Metropolitan Council would be stripped of its authority to distribute millions of federal transportation dollars if a provision approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday becomes law.

The measure, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Jason Lewis, R-Minn., tackles long-simmering complaints about gubernatorial appointees, rather than elected officials, leading the powerful regional government.

The council's status as the Twin Cities' official transportation planning organization is grandfathered into federal law, which otherwise mandates that those boards must have local elected officials.

"We now have in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region the only board in the country that is entirely nonelected, the only [transportation planning organization] that has the authority to independently raise taxes and is nonelected," Lewis said during debate on his amendment, tacked onto the Federal Aviation Administration bill.

The measure's future is uncertain in the Senate, which has yet to vote on its own FAA reauthorization bill. In a letter to the state's congressional delegation Wednesday,

Gov. Mark Dayton, a DFLer, warned that the change would "circumvent a long-standing and productive process at a time when transportation investment is critical to our region."

Met Council Chair Alene Tchourumoff also criticized the proposal. "We cannot predict whether the region, and its many diverse interests, would be able to continue to find common ground on building a new [planning organization]," Tchourumoff said in a statement. "This uncertainty could paralyze our regional transportation planning and funding efforts, putting billions of dollars in federal funding at risk."

Lewis said the existing structure already breeds uncertainty.

"Uncertainty is a board that changes course every time there's a new election in the governor's mansion," Lewis said.

U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen, D-Wash., said Lewis' amendment "is attempting to break apart the operating structure of a local [planning organization] seemingly to punish it."

The Met Council's structure has been controversial since its creation in the 1960s. Republican state legislators are advancing bills to replace the board with elected officials. Dayton vetoed a similar effort last year.

The federal government requires metro areas to have a planning organization to coordinate and plan for how the region doles out federal transportation funds. The law says they must include local elected officials, except for those operating under a state law passed before 1991. A number of suburban counties hired a lobbyist in 2015 to argue that the Met Council was running afoul of those rules. They were rebuffed by federal transportation officials. In its decisions on which projects to fund, the council seeks recommendations from a transportation advisory board made up partly of local elected officials. But that board is not the designated planning organization for the Twin Cities.

IN MEMORY OF MARY ELEANOR WIGGINS BOWERS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2018

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, South Carolina last week paid tribute to the late Mary Eleanor Wiggins Bowers of Estill, South Carolina. She will always be cherished as a Southern Lady who lovingly served constituents at the U.S. House of Representatives Office in Estill.

The following thoughtful obituary was published in *The State* on May 4, 2018:

Mary Eleanor Wiggins Bowers died at home in Estill, surrounded by her adoring family after a long, rich, and wonderful life. Born March 20, 1931 in Estill, South Carolina to Robert Graham and Louise Folk Wiggins, she was the granddaughter of Thomas Jackson and May Smoak Folk and Robert Graham and Mary Crane Wiggins all of Estill.

Mary Eleanor finished Estill High School as valedictorian and attended Mercer University. She loved to jitterbug, once dancing holes in the soles of the shoes bought that day and always said she fell in love with her Corrin while "cuttin' a rug". She married "that cute Bowers boy" of Luray on August 27, 1949. She was the mother of Sharon B. Green (Roy), Mayor Corrin Fitts Bowers, Jr. (Sallie) both of Estill, Elizabeth B. Palles (Mitch), and Graham B. Solana (Mark) both

of Savannah. Grandsons include John Green (Deana) of Jacksonville, Corrin Green (Hanna) of Pawley's Island, Andrew Green (Elizabeth) of Aiken, Mitchell Palles III of Charlotte, Corrin Fitts Bowers III (Abigail) of Estill, Joseph Solana II, and Henry Solana of Savannah; three granddaughters, Mary Crane Palles Orne (David) of Savannah, Louisa Bowers Beach (Brandon) of Estill, and Mary Tippins Solana of Savannah; seven great grandsons, Patrick, William, and Thomas Green of Jacksonville, Corrin Green, Jr., and Samuel Green of Pawley's Island, Marshall Beach of Estill, and Charles Orne of Savannah, two great granddaughters, Sallie Sims Beach of Estill, and Eliza Green of Aiken. She often stated "My big family is the best thing ever!"

She loved the Lord and was a lifelong member of Lawtonville Baptist Church, sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, GAs, Sunbeams, Young Women's Association, and led Training Union for many years with Corrin. She served as W.M.U. president on two occasions, was a Circle leader, served on two pastor search committees, and was a charter member and chair of the Lawtonville Historical Society. For years, she collected children from around Luray to study the Bible on the family farm.

Mama Mama, as she was known to her grandchildren and many who loved her, could bring a room to life with her magnetic personality and gift of gab. Often drawing company with her encyclopedic knowledge of the area's rich history and genealogy, she welcomed all into her warm home with bird dog under foot and food on the stove. A visit with Mama Mama was always an adventure, as she might entertain by playing the piano by ear or put you to work on a flower cutting expedition, antique hunt, or tombstone search.

Mary Eleanor helped establish the Hampton County Historical Society, and was instrumental in saving both the Bull Durham building and Estill's first town hall. She loved Estill, and belonged to many clubs including Social Dozen (over 60 Years), Estill Music Club, was a founding member of Friendship Book Club and Monday Night Couples Bridge, and Thursday's big and little supper clubs.

A tireless civil servant, Mary Eleanor worked 30 years in the voting polls, Estill's first zoning board, the community relations committee for the federal prison, and was a member of the Estill election committee. Her penchant for politics gave her ample opportunity to educate people on what their platform "should be". She ran the U.S. Representative office in Estill from 1987 until 2003 for Arthur Ravenel, Jr., Floyd Spence, and Joe Wilson, maintaining her status as a staunch Democrat in a sea of beloved Republicans. She served on the Tricentennial book committee for Both Sides of the Swamp as well as assisted Coy Kelly Johnston in the book, *Two Centuries of Lawtonville Baptists*. During that time she indexed Lawtonville cemetery, scrubbing down gravestones along the way.

She was predeceased by her loving husband Corrin Fitts Bowers and her grandson, Graham Fontaine Solana. In addition to her children, she is survived by one brother, Robert Graham "Bro" Wiggins III (Vivienne) of Estill, one aunt, Barbara F. Callahan of Warrenton, N.C., chosen daughter Geraldine Brantley, four nieces, seven nephews, and special cousin, Thomas Folk (Jan), as well as eighteen grand nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be 11 AM Saturday in the Lawtonville Baptist Church conducted by Rev. Jamie Norris and Rev. Noel Cooper with burial in the Lawtonville Cemetery in Estill, directed by Peeples-Rhoden Funeral Home.