

Mary Alice O'Connor will be remembered by me and the Contra Costa community for dedication to peace and harmony in Contra Costa and around the world.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Ms. FRANKEL. Madam Speaker, on roll call vote 55, I was not present because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "NAY."

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LOCAL PROSECUTOR HOME RULE ACT OF 2019

#### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Local Prosecutor Home Rule Act of 2019 to give District of Columbia residents another important element of the self-government enjoyed by all other American citizens, including those in the U.S. territories. The bill would establish a local prosecutor's office designated under local law to prosecute all local crimes in the District. Under federal law, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, a federal entity, is responsible for prosecuting most local crimes committed by adults here, which is the greater part of its caseload, in addition to prosecuting federal crimes. This bill is special because it effectuates a 2002 advisory referendum, approved by 82 percent of D.C. voters, to create a local prosecutor's office.

There is no law enforcement issue of greater importance to D.C. residents on which they have less say than the prosecution of local crimes here. A U.S. Attorney has no business prosecuting the local crimes of a jurisdiction, an anachronism that is out of place in any American self-governing jurisdiction. In fact, the territories of the United States—Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands—all have local prosecutors to prosecute local crimes. The absence of a local D.C. prosecutor is one more anachronism from the pre-home rule days when D.C. had no local government. The goal of this bill is to give the District the same jurisdiction over the criminal justice matters that state, local and territorial jurisdictions justifiably regard as mandatory.

Amending federal law to create a local prosecutor would be an important step toward our goal of achieving true self-government. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

#### HONORING DONALD HAMM AT CONGRESSMAN VELA'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

#### HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Donald Hamm for his positive contributions to the Rio Grande Valley.

Mr. Hamm was born in Montgomery, Alabama and joined the United States Army after graduating from high school. He was honorably discharged from the military after serving his country for six years. He enrolled in nursing school, and has served as a nurse in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) since the 1990s. The welcoming environment and diverse culture of the Valley encouraged Mr. Hamm to make Brownsville his permanent home.

Mr. Hamm is an active member of our community, engaging in areas beyond the medical field. He was elected 2nd Vice President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's LRGV chapter. Hamm founded the South Texas Mass Choir (STMC) in 2006, and serves as its director. STMC, the first and only Gospel Mass Choir in South Texas, had its debut performance in 2006 at the first ever Gospel Explosion in Brownsville, Texas at the Jacob Brown Auditorium. Mr. Hamm is also a pastor at the Kingdom Connection Worship Center, and provides marriage counseling to couples in the region.

I am pleased to recognize Mr. Hamm's positive work in Texas' 34th Congressional District. Brownsville is thankful for his service in the military and the medical field. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him, his family, and friends on this special occasion.

HOWARD G. LANE—JUSTICE,  
JUDGE LAWYER, ADVOCATE

#### HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. MEEKS. Madam Speaker, the Honorable Howard G. Lane, Supreme Court Justice, Queens County, 11th Judicial District (Retired) was elected Judge of the Civil Court in Queens County in November 2003, after 24 years of practicing law. A graduate of Manhattan College where he was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree and awarded a Juris Doctor degree in 1978 from Hofstra University Law School and the recipient of Fredrick Douglass National Moot Court Competition, "Best Oralist" Northeast Regional Competition Award and admitted to practice law in the state of New York in 1979.

From 1979 to Judge Lane's election to the Civil Court, he served as Law Clerk and Principal Court Attorney for Supreme Court Justice Leslie G. Leach in the Queens County Court prior to serving as a sole practitioner engaged in the private practice of law and hearings. In his long and distinguished career, he also served as a Hearing Officer for the Transit Adjudication Bureau and staff attorney for Community Action for Legal Services, Inc.

Justice Lane's approach to leadership is exemplified by his fervent belief in the concept of

teamwork and empowerment. His aim has been to lead by example, re-energizing and transforming the culture of the judicial institutions he has led through a partnership between administrators and front-line staff. His commitment to the Judicial System and his respect for the value of our law resulted in his legal opinions and rulings being recognized as exemplary of the finest legal analysis and thinking.

That I, GREGORY W. MEEKS, Member of the 116th Congress, on behalf of the constituents of the Fifth Congressional District of New York, congratulate Howard G. Lane for his twenty-four years of service to quality legal practice. On behalf of the 723,000 residents of the Fifth Congressional District, I thank Judge Lane for his outstanding and ongoing contribution to our Judicial Institution's integrity and local and global community's wellbeing.

#### COAL RIDGE CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIP TRIBUTE

#### HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. TIPTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Coal Ridge Titans' co-ed cheer team for winning the 3A Cheer Spirit state championship in Denver. Their All-Girls team also placed second in the All-Girls category.

In total, the Titan's co-ed team scored 78.05 points over the opposing Strasburg, which scored 71.12 points. Bayfield placed third and Alamosa placed fourth in the state championship spirit competition. The Titan's success is a testament to their strength, teamwork, and dedication. Team members included: Kyla Boyd, Andrea Jurado, Pilar Pagni, Kalicia MacGregor, Haven Prodzinski, Cipriana Dacuma, Paige Stecklein, Christian Vasquez, Hartleigh Porter, Madison Balizan, Tana Couey, Tori Byers, Brayden Kammers, Nathan Tomasello, Nicole Elliott, Lacey Peterson, Annikya Wight.

Alongside the co-ed team, the All-Girls Coal Ridge cheer team placed second overall in the state with an overall score of 68.02. Only four of the 19 girls on the team had formal cheer experience, which made their win especially significant. Their endless work-ethic and ability to overcome adversity, which culminated in their ultimate success, should make them proud. For many of the team's players, this win is the achievement of a goal they have worked towards for years. I commend their coaches and each member of the team for their sportsmanship and competitive spirit. Team members included: Olivia Oldham, Litzy Martinez, Litzy Rivera, Morgan Blodeay, Jinessa Hayden, Valerie Capraro, Samantha Sarmiento, Samantha Copeland, Leila Green, Natalie Smyth, Aurie Madrid, Savannah Madrid, Denisse Ortega, Odalys Quezada, Brynlee Elswick, Phoebe Young, Cara Groves, Rhaya Carmichael, Sydney Stanley.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to have these incredible students call the Third Congressional District in Western Colorado home, and I offer my sincere congratulations. I wish them luck in their future endeavors, and I am eager to see what they will accomplish going forward.

# HONORING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FIREFIGHTERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th Anniversary of the African American Firefighters Historical Society. The African American Firefighters Historical Society was founded in Baltimore, Maryland on January 23, 2009 by two, now-retired, members of the Baltimore City Fire Department: Firefighter George Collins and Lieutenant Michael Jensen. It was started as part of an event celebrating the 55-year reunion of the first African Americans appointed to the Baltimore City Fire Department. While researching the history of African-American firefighters in Baltimore, it did not take long before they discovered that nearly every fire department around the country had its own story of African Americans contributing to their ranks.

The mission of the African American Firefighters Historical Society is to collect, preserve and disseminate historical data and information relating to the contributions made by firefighters of color, and others who have contributed to such history. This material is used to educate and mentor firefighters and the communities that they serve.

The Historical Society is also a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and it hosts an annual Salute Dinner. This dinner honors African-American firefighters, entities, individuals, and dates that are significant to the fire service history of African Americans. It is the only event of its kind in the world, and they are proud that the dinner has become their signature event.

All the honorees over the last 10 years have been extremely deserving of their recognition. Most have never had their contributions acknowledged. These individuals are humble men and women, who would tell you that they were just doing what needed to be done. Whether it be to acknowledge a heroic act or some other significant act, such as being the first to reach a rank or position, accomplished by firefighters, the African American Firefighters Historical Society is always interested in finding these individuals. The organization also welcomes information about organizations who have reached historic milestones or anniversaries relevant to African-American firefighters.

To show just how relevant The African American Firefighters Historical Society has become, I would like to take a moment to share the stories of some of its honorees.

Stories of people like Edward Collic, who faced significant hurdles to becoming Baltimore City Fire Department's First African American Lieutenant Pilot. During promotion testing, Collic was given ten additional navigation questions by his Coast Guard examiner, effectively turning what is normally a 4-hour test into an 8-hour exam. Still, he passed and was reluctantly given his 100 Ton Masters Licenses. Collic worked as an Acting Lieutenant for thirteen years, being passed over for promotions several times despite consistently scoring first or second on the promotion exam.

In some cases, he was deliberately removed from the top of the list. Collic was finally promoted, possibly becoming Maryland's first African-American Fireboat Lieutenant. With a reputation for being the best Lieutenant Pilot, one night he was sought out by his Battalion Chief to respond to a train that had derailed with hazardous material on board. He took his fireboat up the Susquehanna River to Port Deposit, Maryland, on what would become the longest run in BCFD history.

The Society has also honored people like Mrs. Carrye Brown, on the 20th Anniversary of her appointment to the highest fire service position in the country. In January 1995, Brown was nominated by President Bill Clinton to be our Nation's first woman and first African American to head the U.S. Fire Administration. In that role, she was responsible for legislation, regulations and standards for all fire departments in the country. To this day, Mrs. Brown holds the record for the longest serving person in that position.

They also paid tribute to civil rights lawyers Kenneth L. Johnson and Gerald A. Smith. On December 6, 1971 they filed suit against the City of Baltimore to address discrimination in hiring and promotions within the city's fire department. This landmark decision changed the hiring and promotions processes in both the city's fire and police departments, benefiting countless individuals. Their 1973 victory cemented the legacy of their clients and rendered their firm a dominant force in civil rights litigation on the east coast.

The Society has also honored the Gorham Family. A tragic fire in August 1946 destroyed the home of Leroy and Lillian Gorham. Tragically, the couple lost three children: Jean, who was 5, Ruth who was 2, and Leroy Jr., who was only 11 months year old. In response, the community came together to establish Chapel Oaks Volunteer Fire Company in Prince George's County, Maryland. Without any knowledge or experience, men from all over the area started Maryland's only African-American Volunteer Fire Department. By the year's end, they purchased a fire engine and equipment and began providing fire protection for the Deanwood Park/Chapel Oaks Community. They have serviced Prince George's County ever since.

The African American Fire Fighters Historical Society has presented approximately 200 flags flown over the U.S. Capitol for honorees on significant dates of their accomplishments; obtained almost 1,000 Citations, Proclamations, Resolutions, Certificates of Recognition and Letters of Acknowledgment for honorees; successfully advocated for legislation to have a fire house named for an honoree; been instrumental in building partnerships, financing the design, and advocating for local government to establish The Racheal M. Wilson Memorial Park and Garden at the location of Racheal M. Wilson's death, the first woman killed in the history of the Baltimore City Fire Department, and sponsored Baltimore High School students' trips to Washington, D.C. for Capitol Hill tours and to visit my Braintrust panels at The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference.

As the African American Firefighters Historical Society reflects on their many accomplishments, they ask, "what's next?" George Collins, Founder and President states:

"We are looking forward to creating a brick and mortar entity in the form of a fire

fighter museum. This will showcase the unknown and often buried contributions of so many African Americans in the fire service. Yet we will always fulfill the purpose of our organization. Give people their flowers while they can smell them, show them acknowledgments of their accomplishments while they can see it, and tell them how much you appreciate them while they can hear it."

For these reasons, we stop to highlight the endeavors of The African American Firefighters Historical Society over the past 10 years.

# HONORING BRIAN McDONALD AT CONGRESSMAN VELA'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

## HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. VELA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Brian McDonald for his contributions to the Rio Grande Valley.

Mr. McDonald received a B.A. in Political Science and History from Texas A&M University, and a J.D. from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University. After law school, Mr. McDonald settled in the Rio Grande Valley, where he handled state prosecutions in the Cameron County District Attorney's Office.

Mr. McDonald's outstanding work and commitment to public service led him to his current position as an Assistant United States Attorney with the United States Attorney's Office in Brownsville. In this capacity, he dedicates his efforts to keeping the community safe through the prosecution of federal crimes. Our community is a better place thanks to his pursuit of justice for all people.

Mr. McDonald serves as a board member of the Cameron County Young Lawyers Association, where he works to connect young lawyers to the community through service programs.

I am pleased to recognize Mr. McDonald for his successful career thus far in Texas' 34th Congressional District. We are all thankful for his dedication to serving justice, and inspiring the next generation of lawyers in the Rio Grande Valley. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing his potential and commending him in advance for his bright career.

# INTRODUCTION OF PRIVATE STUDENT LOAN BANKRUPTCY FAIRNESS ACT

## HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act, a bill I introduced earlier today with my colleagues DANNY DAVIS and ERIC SWALWELL. This bill would provide critical relief to Americans in severe financial distress who are struggling with overwhelming private student loan debt.

Before 2005, private student loans issued by for-profit lenders were treated in bankruptcy like most other unsecured consumer debt,