

Harry Bajraktari soon became an Albanian-American community leader and worked hard to educate politicians, diplomats, and experts on the issue of Kosova and Albania.

The Kosovar crisis was part of the larger Yugoslavian implosion, with genocide and massive war crimes ravaging the now-dissolved country. With waves of refugees and a spreading instability in southern Europe, it was clear that American leadership was desperately needed.

Fortunately, the cause for Kosovar independence found broad bipartisan support in Congress and throughout the country. With Harry's guidance, I helped found the bipartisan Albanian Issues Caucus more than 25 years ago. I'll never forget traveling to Kosova in 1996 with Harry and raising the American flag at the opening of the United States Information Agency office in Kosova's capital, Prishtina.

Through his efforts fighting for freedom in Kosova, Harry and many of his friends in the Albanian American community came to know and work closely with leaders in the Senate and House. Across the American political spectrum, Harry led his community in meetings with key leaders, including Senator Bob Dole, Vice President Biden, MITCH MCCONNELL, Alfonse D'Amato, Tom Lantos, Susan Molinari, and many others.

In his advocacy for independence in Kosova and democracy in Albania, Harry Bajraktari contributed to community organizations, wrote-ops, met with American and international officials, testified in the U.S. Congress and spoke at many rallies. In 1991, he founded Illyria, a modern and professional Albanian-American newspaper. Based in New York, it had subscribers throughout the United States and overseas. To this day, Illyria remains a voice for Albanian-Americans and continues to inform the community and the American people.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush issued what is known as the Christmas Warning to Milosevic, threatening military intervention if Serbia provoked a war in Kosova. In March 1999, after Belgrade's tanks rolled into Kosova, President Bill Clinton fulfilled that promise, and the United States led NATO in war against Yugoslavia. They stopped a humanitarian catastrophe and the ethnic cleansing of more than a million Albanians, and liberated Kosova.

This represented the end of the wars of Milosevic's Balkan wars and, one year later, he fell from power, ushering in a new era of relative peace and stability in the region. In 2008, Kosova became the newest independent country in Europe with the support and the recognition of the United States. It is now recognized by more than 110 nations.

Harry Bajraktari followed the example of other great Albanian-American leaders of the early 20th century like Bishop Fan Noli and Ambassador Faik Konitza, who worked to forge the special relationship and historic friendship between ethnic Albanians and the United States of America. He was also inspired by a great Albanian American leader in business and politics, Anthony Athanas, in Boston.

Harry and many others from such states as New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Illinois, Michigan and other states worked together and became instrumental in making the voice of Albanian Ameri-

cans heard in Washington. They founded the National Albanian American Council, which was the leading Albanian American organization in Washington, D.C. for many years.

Although Metë Bajraktari passed away in 1998 and did not live to see his dream of a free and independent Kosova come true, his family continues to remember him as they continue to fight for their homeland. Today, a major shopping center in Peja is dedicated to him, fifty years after he fled Belgrade's oppression. That shopping center stands strong in the heart of the city and I am honored that a street in my name borders that facility.

For his great work in support of Kosova's independence, advocacy for democracy in Albania, and human rights throughout the Balkans, Harry Bajraktari has been recognized with the highest medals and honors. These awards are high honors from the President of Kosova, the President of Albania and recognition from the White House. When the story of Kosova is finally told, let us always recall the commitment of Harry Bajraktari and his family.

Here in the United States, Harry Bajraktari is recognized for his support for humanitarian and community initiatives. He and his family are proud, patriotic, Americans with a deep gratitude for what their new home, the United States, has given to them, and, in exchange, their hard work and success has made New York and this country a better place to live.

When they arrived on these shores, the Bajraktaris were only six people. A seventh, the youngest sibling, Miftar, was born during that first year in America. Today, Harry Bajraktari is the proud father of four children and has eight grandchildren. His sister, Nuriye (Bajraktari) Osmani has four children and three grandchildren. Litafete (Bajraktari) Gega has four children and one grandchild. Hateme (Bajraktari) Nezaj has three children. Miftar Bajraktari has three children.

Metë and Ziza have passed away, but their memory lives with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The continued story of the Bajraktari family will live on as a singular example of achieving the American dream. And today, their vision has become a reality, and their promises have been fulfilled. Harry has told me on many occasions his family's journey to America and the opportunities afforded to them through this journey was worth their many sacrifices. These are the kind of stories and people that add depth and humanity to our country's rich heritage. And, for myself, I am proud to call Harry Bajraktari and his family close personal friends and to honor the 50th anniversary of their arrival in the United States.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF BRETT
MCVANNEL FOR HIS SERVICE IN
THE GAYLORD CITY POLICE DE-
PARTMENT

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, it's my honor to recognize Brett McVannel for his retirement as chief of the Gaylord City Police Department. Through his exceptional leadership and steadfast devotion to his community, Brett has become an indispensable part of Michigan's First District.

Born and raised in Gaylord, Chief McVannel dedicated nearly 25 years of his life to the people of Michigan, serving in Kalkaska and Otsego County before becoming chief in Gaylord. During his tenure Brett thrived as a leader and communicator, working productively with other local leaders and forming a familial bond in the department he oversaw. His exceptional leadership skills are reflected in the excellence of the officers who have served under him and the trust placed in him by the people of Northern Michigan. Chief McVannel's constant dedication to the public good is commendable, and the impact of his work on the people of Northern Michigan cannot be overstated.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Chief Brett McVannel for his decades of service to the people of our state. Michiganders can take great pride in knowing the First District is home to such a devoted individual. On behalf of my constituents, I wish Brett all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT
DANIEL SWAIM

HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Daniel Swaim for his exceptional service to the House CAO Office of Finance's Budget, Planning and Analysis (BPA) division.

Lt. Swaim was detailed to BPA during a vital period to coordinate the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget formulation process and assist with execution of the House's FY 2019 resources. His superior knowledge of the federal budgeting process, keen analytical skills, and work ethic enabled BPA to mitigate its temporary personnel gaps. Lt. Swaim's efforts facilitated better insight on available resources, led to optimal decision making on allocation of funds, and ultimately enabled timely delivery of a well justified FY 2020 House Budget.

Lt. Swaim's stellar professionalism and devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Lt. Swaim for his dedication and service and wish him fair winds and following seas as he embarks on his next assignment as the Commanding Officer of USCG Cutter *Sturgeon Bay*.

HONORING RONALD DELLUMS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, we celebrate our colleague and friend Ronald Dellums at a time of historic polarization in Congress. It is a good time to remember the peace advocate who chaired the Armed Services Committee with such equanimity that he won the respect, even the friendship, of those who opposed every cause, of the many into which Ron poured his considerable talent.

I first came to admire Ron even before being elected to Congress from my work in the Free South Africa anti-apartheid movement. For 14 years, Ron did not relent until he freed his landmark bill for South Africa divestment, overcoming a presidential veto.

By the time I was elected to Congress, Ron had already been chair of the District of Columbia Committee for more than a decade. That committee is long gone, and nothing would have pleased Chairman Dellums more than its demise. But when freedom-loving Ron Dellums first came to Congress, he knew that if there had to be such a Committee, he wanted a seat on it. Just as Ron sought peace by serving on the Armed Service Committee, he sought to free D.C. from congressional control by serving on the D.C. Committee.

He joined the D.C. Committee during his very first term in Congress. Upon becoming chair of the Committee, Ron framed his service as "an advocate, not an overseer of District affairs." No sooner had Ron gotten to Congress in 1975, in his very first term, long before I even thought about becoming a Member, he introduced the first D.C. statehood bill.

Ron would relish our progress today as we close in on enough votes for the D.C. statehood bill to pass in the House this term. We expect a vote soon in the Oversight and Reform Committee to send the bill to the House Floor. When that committee vote occurs, we will not be able to claim we are breaking new or historic ground. In 1987, more than 30 years ago, Chairman Ron Dellums proclaimed, "There should be no colonies in a democracy" and led the District Committee in a vote for statehood for the District of Columbia that passed in his Committee.

The American citizens who live in the nation's capital will forever remember Ron Dellums, prescient warrior for equality and freedom—and well ahead of his time—a leader for statehood for the District of Columbia.

LORELEI DOMKE—CRITICAL
LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP (CLS)

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Lorelei Domke, a Cape Coral, FL resident and senior at New College of Florida studying Chinese language and culture, who was awarded the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship.

The Critical Language Scholarship Program is merit-based and funded through an annual appropriation to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The scholarship program seeks to expand the number of Americans studying foreign languages for national security and economic prosperity by providing instruction abroad in fourteen key languages. Out of more than 5,500 student applications, Ms. Domke was among the 572 students to be selected.

I congratulate Lorelei on her selection for the Critical Language Scholarship and look forward to seeing the contributions she will make to our community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MAPLE
ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Maintaining Appropriate Protections For Legal Entry (MAPLE) Act. This bill, which is included within the Responsibly Addressing the Marijuana Policy Gap Act (H.R. 1119), would exempt cannabis-use and/or participation in the cannabis industry as a disqualification for entry into the United States from a country that has ended its marijuana prohibition and would protect foreign nationals who participate in cannabis activity in states where it's legal from deportation.

Our federal cannabis laws are outdated and out of touch. They also have negatively impacted countless lives. Congress cannot continue to be out of touch with a movement that a growing majority of Americans support. It's time to end this senseless prohibition.

HONORING DR. HIRAM TAVAREZ

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Dr. Hiram Tavaréz from McAllen, Texas. Dr. Tavaréz recently retired after dedicating his career to the health and prosperity of the people of South Texas. For the past 55 years, he has worked tirelessly to help people in the Rio Grande Valley lead healthy lives.

Dr. Tavaréz earned his medical degree from the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon in Monterrey, Mexico, and started his residency in internal medicine at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas. In 1965, Dr. Tavaréz finished his residency and joined his brothers, Marvin and Vicente, in McAllen where they began practicing medicine. There, they opened the Tavaréz Medical Center which still serves our community today. In the early days of the Tavaréz Medical Center, Hiram and his brothers frequently made house calls homes to administer treatment and care. Dr. Tavaréz would continue to demonstrate his unwavering commitment to serving others throughout his career. His good deeds did not go unnoticed as he received several honors and awards for his commitment to his community and patients.

Dr. Tavaréz's dedication to helping others is matched by his staff's loyalty and mission of service. The staff at the Tavaréz Medical Center consistently praise Dr. Tavaréz for his compassion and his kindness; sentiments echoed by his patients. For more than half a century, Dr. Tavaréz has unfailingly ensured every patient receives the highest quality care possible. His past shines brightly with his good feats, and his retirement is well deserved.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Tavaréz is a pillar of the community in South Texas and serves as an example to all of us. It is truly an honor to represent dedicated, selfless individuals like him.

OFFICER ANTHONY NERI

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Anthony Neri, an officer with the Sanibel Police Department who passed away on Monday, May 6, 2019. Mr. Neri had served the Sanibel Police Department since 2012, and as an officer since 2015.

Prior to serving with the Police Department in Sanibel, Mr. Neri was a Revenue Officer with the U.S. Department of the Treasury for 30 years. He also served as a police officer in Union Township, New Jersey prior to moving to Southwest Florida.

Officer Neri was honored along with 18 other officers at the Lee County Fallen Officer Memorial Ceremony held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at Centennial Park in Fort Myers, Florida.

I am grateful to Officer Neri for his service to our community, and my thoughts and prayers are with his friends and family.

OPINION PIECE BY U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL DAVID M. FRIEDMAN

HON. LEE M. ZELDIN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the following piece authored by U.S. Ambassador to Israel, David M. Friedman in honor of the one-year anniversary of the U.S. embassy opening in Jerusalem:

A YEAR AFTER OPENING THE JERUSALEM
EMBASSY: ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY

On May 14, 2018, the United States finally opened its embassy in Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem. In making the courageous decision to take this historic step, President Donald Trump not only fulfilled a 23-year-old mandate from the United States Congress but he also recognized a 3,000-year-old truth that Israel's enemies have long sought to erase.

America has been fascinated by Jerusalem since the early days of our republic. In 1844, Warder Cresson, the first consul general, announced after his appointment by the secretary of state that the United States was thereby extending its protection to the Jews of Jerusalem. The first permanent consular presence opened just inside the Jaffa Gate in 1857, and diplomatic presence has remained constant in and around the Old City ever since. President Abraham Lincoln, just before his death, told his wife how he longed to visit Jerusalem. And President Ulysses Grant and Mark Twain both visited Jerusalem in the mid-19th century and wrote extensively about their experiences.

Neither Grant nor Twain were all that impressed with Jerusalem in those days. It was poor, inhospitable and undeveloped. The Old City of Jerusalem remained that way well into the 20th century, whether under the rule of the Ottoman Empire until 1917, the British Mandate until 1948, or the Kingdom of Jordan until 1967. In 1967, Jerusalem was reunified as a single city under Israeli rule. Almost immediately, Jerusalem began to