

and 8, 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 236; YEA on Roll Call No. 237; YEA on Roll Call No. 238; and YEA on Roll Call No. 239.

RECOGNIZING THE 193RD SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

HON. SCOTT PERRY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. PERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the outstanding Airmen of the 193rd Special Operations Wing, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, for earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award—for the 19th time. This highly prestigious award recognizes the Wing's exceptionally meritorious service from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019.

During this period, this one-of-a-kind unit deployed more than 400 Service Members globally across 20 nations, filling numerous Reserve Component Posture taskings and missions. The specialized EC-130J Commando Solo aircraft flew 115 combat missions and executed 1,009 broadcast hours, meeting all Central Command requirements while achieving an overall 1,463 sorties and 3,924 flight hours.

During the same period, the Wing also distinguished itself by deploying its world-class Airmen from their Engineering Installation, Red Horse, Security Forces, Air Operations Center, Communications, Air Support Operations and Medical units who expertly supported overseas contingency missions. Collectively, the Wing supported counter-terrorism/counter-narcotics operations as well as named Operations Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel, Spartan Shield, Atlantic Resolve, and Resolute Support, altogether advancing our military's effectiveness on the battlefield while protecting our Nation and our American way of life.

The Airmen of the 193rd Special Operations Wing consistently demonstrate excellence in their training and operations across our Nation and around the world. On behalf of the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, we're honored to be the home of such a distinguished unit, and I commend the Wing for earning the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award—again. I extend my heartfelt thanks to them for their hard work, tireless dedication and steadfast service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GREG PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I am not recorded for roll call vote No. 239 on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have

voted Yea on H.R. 8354, Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative Act.

This bill would create the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative within the Justice Department. As a United States Marine, I am strongly committed to providing for our national defense and taking care of the men and women who sacrificed everything for our freedom.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF MARIO R. JORGE, P.E., SAN ANTONIO DISTRICT ENGINEER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Mr. Mario R. Jorge. Mr. Jorge is retiring after serving the Texas Department of Transportation for more than 36 years.

Mr. Jorge, at the age of 12, immigrated with his family from Cuba to the United States in 1974. While it was a challenging process for him and his family, they knew they were on the right path for a better future. Among the many difficulties he personally faced, Mr. Jorge started his education in the 7th grade without being able to speak a word of English. However, with hard work and diligence he was able to overcome this obstacle. He also found that he was particularly talented in the field of mathematics. Utilizing his skill in mathematics, Mr. Jorge went on to earn a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas as well as a professional engineer's license.

Mr. Jorge began his career with TxDOT as a member of the survey crew and as a construction inspector for the Pharr District in 1983. In 1984, he was employed at the Dallas District where he worked in construction inspection and roadway design. He then transferred to the Pharr District in 1985 where he worked for several years and received the TxDOT Design Award for the US 83/281 interchange project in Pharr, before being promoted to Area Engineer in 1993. However, through his continued hard work he was eventually promoted to District Engineer for the Pharr District in 2002. It was under his leadership and guidance that the district completed the expansion and designation of over 100 miles of interstate system on I-2 and US 69, as well as several international projects. Nonetheless, after many years of service with the Pharr District, he soon became the District Engineer for the San Antonio District in 2013. In San Antonio, Mr. Jorge led the district with an even larger project delivery portfolio which included expansions on US 281, I-10 West and East, 1-35 NEX, and LP 1604 North and South, an energy sector project delivery program, and countless other initiatives with local partners and stakeholders.

I have worked with Mr. Jorge for many years and witnessed first-hand his dedication to his work. A trait that he learned from his parents, who risked their lives and worked hard to realize the American dream. I also want to recognize him for being a strong lead-

er who made sure to always treat his colleagues with respect and care. A characteristic that allowed him to be successful in all of his endeavors.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Jorge on an outstanding career and wish him all the best in his next chapter of life. I also wish the best to his wife, Elsa, as well as his three sons and the rest of his family.

CONGRATULATING THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS

HON. MIKE BOST

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois in receiving the prestigious Abilene Trophy for its support of the men and women who serve at Southern Illinois' Scott Air Force Base.

Established in 1999, the Abilene Trophy is awarded every year in recognition of the best community support for an Air Force Base. This year, the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois was selected in part because of the growing Scott Patriot Program, which allows servicemembers to identify businesses, communities, and organizations that are designated as "military friendly." The partnership between the Leadership Council and Scott Air Force Base in the STEM and cybersecurity outreach programs provides local servicemembers and the surrounding community the opportunity to work together and energize the regional economy.

The Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and Scott Air Force Base play a vital role in our nation's military readiness. As Southwestern Illinois' largest employer, Scott Air Force Base is a nationally-respected military installation. We couldn't be happier to have organizations like the Leadership Council supporting their mission.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois and Scott Air Force Base for this incredible partnership. On behalf of Illinois' 12th Congressional District, congratulations!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I was notified that I was exposed to COVID-19 and am following quarantine guidelines set by the CDC.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on Roll Call No. 233 (S. 2981)—NAY; on Roll Call No. 234 (MTR for H.R. 3884)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 235 (H.R. 3884)—NAY; on Roll Call No. 236 (H. Res. 512)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 237 (S. 461)—YEA; on Roll Call No. 238 (H.R. 6395)—YEA; and on Roll Call No. 239 (H.R. 8354)—YEA.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAROL CONNOLLY, POET LAUREATE OF SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of an extraordinary woman, Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota. Carol passed away on November 23rd at the age of 85.

Carol lived her entire life to the fullest in her beloved hometown of Saint Paul, and there was no greater joy than her family, raising 7 children and nurturing 15 grandchildren and great grandchildren. In addition to being the heart of a large, loving family, she was active as a catalyst, connector and collaborator for her dynamic community. One of her dear friends aptly observed that “all roads to and from Saint Paul lead through Carol Connolly.” Inspired by the peace and civil rights movements, she was busy throughout her life volunteering for countless organizations, causes and candidates, not to mention running for political office herself. She truly became the change for good that she wanted to see in the world.

Her artistic side shined just as bright, writing and publishing countless poems, plays and columns—and mentoring new writers along the way. At the 2006 ceremony where she was named Poet Laureate, she read one of her poems that captures the essence of this great American city where “neighborhoods are the foundation of our freedom, “ a place where, regardless of background, neighbors care for neighbors and the greatest strength is found in coming together: “A storm thunders along the river as it roams through the city, home to some of us for 2,000 years. Home to others of us who left our native lands to escape famine, or war, or worse, and we are all immigrants.”

Carol's boundless generosity and care for others touched the lives of so many—from her family and friends to strangers. Through her poetry, humor, advocacy and contagious enthusiasm and support for the arts and art makers in our community, she was determined to make the world a better place, and she did. Above all, she was a devoted and beloved mother and grandmother, sister and aunt. It was always clear how deeply she valued the lives of people around her.

It was an honor to call Carol a friend and a neighbor for many years. Her selfless encouragement of others, especially of writers and women running for office, continues to inspire me and so many others throughout our community.

Madam Speaker, please join me in celebrating the outstanding life of Carol Connolly, Poet Laureate of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 6395, WILLIAM M. (MAC) THORNBERRY NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address section 1242 of William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021, Clarification and Expansion of Sanctions relating to Construction of Nord Stream 2 or TurkStream Projects.

On July 20th of this year during House consideration of this bill, I rose in opposition to the amendment that added this provision to the NDAA, which targeted the Nord Stream 2 project with additional sanctions. I was concerned that these sanctions would target the wrong entities. Rather than deterring Russia and Putin, I was worried that it would be used to target European or American companies.

Fortunately, through the conference process, in which I was a conferee as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, we were able to improve on the language that passed the initial House and Senate bills. The conferees decided to include an exception for certain governments and governmental entities. This change was an important and appropriate fix to ensure our allies and partners would not be targeted by sanctions under this provision.

As a conferee on this provision, I want to make clear that the term “government” means any level of government in those countries, including local and municipal governmental entities or authorities, and the term “business enterprise” does not include any entity that performs any public functions or otherwise has any public responsibilities.

I also want to commend my fellow conferees for agreeing to expand and include new language requiring, before the imposition of any sanctions pursuant to this provision, consultations by the Secretary of State with the governments of Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and member countries of the European Union. It is imperative that these consultations are true exchanges of views with the governments described, including EU member countries and institutions, conducted well before any sanctions would be imposed. The consultations must be deliberative and meaningful, and should take place at the Foreign Minister level or higher. Simple notification of a determination to proceed with the imposition of sanctions is not a consultation and would not fulfil the requirements of section 1242.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to my House and Senate colleagues for working with me to make sure this extremely difficult issue is handled with precision. In this revised provision, I think we got much closer to that goal.

BENEFICIARY ENROLLMENT NOTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2020

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2477, BENES Act of 2020, which has been amended to include H.R. 5534, the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act. I advanced both bipartisan bills through my Health Subcommittee and I'm proud to support them on the Floor today.

The BENES Act introduced updates the Part B enrollment process for the first time in 50 years. It requires Medicare to notify people nearing eligibility about their rights and responsibilities, protecting beneficiaries from a lifetime of financial penalties for failure to enroll promptly.

While most beneficiaries are still automatically enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B at age 65 because they're receiving Social Security benefits, a growing number of Americans are not.

In 2016, only 60 percent of Medicare-eligible 65-year-olds were taking Social Security, compared to 92 percent in 2002.

The federal government provides virtually no notification to people who are nearing Medicare eligibility about their responsibilities, including if they must actively enroll.

If you do not enroll in Part B at age 65, then you are required to pay a Part B Late Enrollment Penalty that accrues at 10 percent of the current Part B premium for every year a person should have been—but was not—enrolled in Part B.

The BENES Act requires the federal government to notify people nearing Medicare eligibility about their rights and responsibilities.

The BENES Act also allows coverage to begin more quickly post-enrollment, with Medicare coverage beginning on the first of the month or the first of the following month when a person enrolls.

The BENES Act has been championed by the Medicare Rights Center and over 70 other organizations dedicated to helping Medicare beneficiaries. I'm proud that the House is finally taking this much needed vote and I look forward to this important bill being passed by the Senate and signed into law.

As part of this bill, the House will also pass the Comprehensive Immunosuppressive Drug Coverage for Kidney Transplant Patients Act, championed by Representatives KIND and BURGESS for many years. I'm proud to be an original sponsor of this commonsense policy that will save money and, more importantly, lives.

Today, while Medicare covers a lifetime of dialysis, but kidney transplant recipients currently lose their Medicare coverage 36 months after transplant. Without Medicare coverage for needed immunosuppressive drugs, transplant patients risk losing their new kidney. This legislation closes that gap by continuing coverage for kidney transplant recipients which a nonpartisan HHS analysis found would save 375 kidney transplants each year.

Like the BENES Act, advocates have been fighting for this immunosuppressive coverage