

veterans, and extend the coordination of case management services for homeless veterans.

Elsewhere in the area of housing, the bill expands eligibility for VA Home Loan Guaranty Program to more members of the National Guard and Reserves, reduces the home loan funding fee for veterans impacted by disasters, and extends home loan funding fee rates through 2030.

In a provision especially timely, the bill provides retraining Assistance for Veterans and provides the VA and Labor Secretaries access to the Federal directory of new hires to assist in veterans employment, expand the VET TEC training program for more veterans, extend the Off-Base Transition Training program, and direct VA to provide grants to community organizations for veteran transition assistance programs.

Finally, the bill expands federal aid to counties for veterans' cemeteries; increases funds for State, county, and tribal veterans' cemeteries operating and maintenance expenses; and provides urns and commemorative plaques for deceased veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support these bipartisan, common-sense reforms that would honor and provide for our veterans, who answered the call of their nation and were willing to risk and give all so that we can remain free.

I urge all Members to join me in voting to pass Senate Amendment to H.R. 7105, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020.

HONORING MRS. IDALIA DOMÍNGUEZ DE MARTY FOR 40 YEARS OF SERVICE AS A CONGRESSIONAL STAFFER

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the longest-serving Puerto Rican Congressional staffer, Mrs. Idalia Domínguez de Marty, whom everybody knows her by her nickname "Pichy", for forty years of dedicated service.

Pichy was born and raised in Guayama, Puerto Rico, with family, faith, and education at the center of her upbringing. A committed public servant, her career with the U.S. House of Representatives began in 1980 under the tenure of Congressman Robert García, and in 1990, Congressman José E. Serrano retained her on his staff, where she has proven to be one of the most reliable and trusted staffers on both New York and Puerto Rico issues.

Throughout her service in Congress, Pichy has played a key role in mentoring younger generations who are committed to public service. As an example of that vision, she was instrumental in the implementation of the Córdova & Fernós Congressional Internship Program—an educational program created in 1993 by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico to provide outstanding college students on the Island the opportunity to spend a semester in Washington, D.C. and enjoy the experiences that before were available only to students at mainland institutions.

In her role as Chief Administrator, she has never sought credit for herself and has always

sought to empower other staff members to succeed and serve the American people, with humility and conviction. In addition to her outstanding interpersonal skills, she has handled all or her duties with responsibility, determination, and leadership.

Besides her commitment to constituent service, Pichy has been a leader in Puerto Rico policy issues in Congress and has long advocated for statehood and full equality for our beloved Island. For forty years, Pichy has been on the right side of history, always providing good counsel with both frankness and discretion to statehood leaders. For this, I am truly grateful.

A devout Catholic, Pichy practices her faith living it by example every day, helping the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our society.

In short, Pichy is faith-filled, compassionate, loyal, and an effective manager, and all who have known and worked with her feel privileged for it. Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Mrs. Idalia Domínguez de Marty, our dear "Pichy", for forty years of exceptional public service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I was unable to vote on December 16, 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 244.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETE STAUBER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, due to personal reasons, I had to miss votes on December 16, 2020. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 244.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF CARL WILKERSON

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Carl Wilkerson, a dear friend and inspiration to many throughout North Carolina's Eighth Congressional District.

Mr. Wilkerson was born on March 7, 1935 to the late Willie Wilkerson and Anna Irene White Wilkerson. A native of Rowan County, he served over 32 years as the custodian at China Grove Elementary School.

Mr. Wilkerson made a profound difference in this community. We often highlight educators and their influence on the lives of children. Carl Wilkerson made an impact on the lives of all the children educated at China Grove Elementary School.

Former students and educators alike remember that Carl always had a kind word for everyone, encouraged students and made each one feel special. He is the perfect example of a person who quietly but surely makes a community great.

Mr. Wilkerson passed away on November 22, 2020 and left behind a legacy of kindness and compassion. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and all who knew and loved him. Mr. Wilkerson will live on in the hearts and minds of all who felt his kindness and I join the entire community in honoring his quiet, but extraordinary life.

Madam Speaker, please join me today in honoring the life and legacy of Carl Wilkerson.

IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN JAMIE D. CLARK

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate Captain Jamie D. Clark of the Pennsylvania State Police on her upcoming retirement on January 8, 2021. Captain Clark is currently the only female troop commander in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Captain Clark joined the Pennsylvania State Police in 1991. After graduating from the Academy, she was assigned to Troop A in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. She has also served on Troop D in Butler, Pennsylvania and is currently the Commanding Officer of Troop G in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. She also has served on the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Bureau of Gaming Enforcement, and the Bureau of Training and Education.

Captain Clark had served as a corporal, a sergeant, and a lieutenant before being promoted to a captain in April of 2019. Additionally, she graduated from the 392 Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command.

Captain Clark's outstanding career in law enforcement across southwestern and southcentral Pennsylvania is a true legacy of service. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I congratulate Captain Clark on her retirement and wish her every continued happiness in the chapters to come.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF FORMER COUNCILWOMAN CATHY REYNOLDS

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and achievements of Former Denver City Councilwoman Cathy Reynolds who passed away on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at the age of 75.

Cathy was a leader, fighter and history maker from Colorado. She was a trailblazer-Denver City Council's first elected Councilwoman and also its longest serving member. Originally from Kansas City, Missouri, Cathy moved to Denver in the mid-1960's when her

husband Rick accepted a position with Denver Public Schools. Cathy had a strong desire to give back to her new city, and she landed on the Denver City Council in 1975.

During her 28 years serving on City Council, Cathy proved to be an effective and hard-working elected official. Evidence of her achievements can be found throughout the region—from our world-renowned airport to our popular football stadium and convention center.

But Cathy's most important legacy was her unwavering and fearless commitment to social justice. When she moved to ban assault weapons in Denver, she faced numerous insults and even threats against her own life with the kind of grace and resolve that earned the respect of some of her fiercest opponents. And with similar fortitude, Cathy led the fight on changing local zoning ordinances so that LGBTQ individuals and those who are differently-abled could no longer be excluded from living in certain neighborhoods. Truly, Cathy Reynolds was a force to be reckoned with, as those with whom she served would quickly tell you; however, she was also fair, and funny, and kind to everyone she met.

Not surprisingly, Cathy's unique personal traits and organizing ability led her to fill key leadership roles, including the role of council president, a position in which she served five times. Additionally, beyond the City Council, Cathy's leadership qualities and passion for social progress resulted in her serving two terms as president of the Colorado Municipal League and chair of the National League of Cities.

As a political activist and then a young state legislator in the 1990's, I admired Cathy's style—tough but accessible—and her unwavering commitment to civil rights for all. Cathy was a model for me as I fought at the state level for many of the issues she had successfully championed in Denver.

Put simply, Cathy Reynolds was a trail-blazing and tireless advocate on behalf of the community she loved; and her longtime public service was an inspiration to young leaders regardless of their gender. Though Cathy's legacy will remain alive for many decades to come, her powerful presence will be deeply missed.

My heart goes out to her husband Rick Reynolds, as well as to their two children and four grandchildren. I hope they find comfort in the knowledge that their dear loved one was not only a treasure and inspiration to them, but also to the countless Denverites whose lives she touched.

HONORING THE LIFE OF OSCAR BUNCH

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 18, 2020

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Oscar Bunch. A Virginian, strong and humble working man of uncommon grace, Mr. Bunch passed from this life at age 90 on Friday, December 11, 2020 surrounded by his family in his home.

Delivered by a midwife, Oscar Bunch was born to Myrtle and Edward Bunch on March 12, 1930 in Portsmouth, Virginia. Born in the

depths of the Great Depression, Oscar knew hard times and hard work early on. As a child he was already working long ten-hour days alongside his family as sharecroppers picking cotton, peanuts and corn and earning less than one dollar a day. This experience, along with values earned from a devoutly Christian mother who believed in unconditional love and hard work, taught him that all people have value and worth, that hard working people deserve to live decently, and that compassion matters.

When he was thirteen years old, Oscar went to work in the Norfolk Navy Yard when World War II created a shortage of workers. At age fifteen, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and saw tours of Germany, France and Belgium during the war. After the war ended and Oscar returned home to Virginia, the GI Bill gave him the opportunity to go the school. He earned his Journeyman's card as a pipefitter, finishing his apprenticeship in 1952. Along the way Oscar met and married his wife Ruby, and together they raised their children Michael, Brian, Wesley and Donna.

The young family moved to Toledo, Ohio, and in 1956 Oscar began his career at the Chevrolet Transmission plant on Alexis Road where he promptly became involved in the UAW. In 1972 he was elected as the Skilled Trades Bargaining Representative of UAW Local 14. He was elected the Local 14 President in 1978 and was re-elected to ten consecutive terms. To date, Oscar Bunch is the longest serving union local President in UAW history. An outstanding negotiator as labor leader, Oscar always looked out for the rank-and-file, ensuring their voice was heard and their needs met. Among his lasting legacies is Oscar Bunch park, a lovely greenspace between the plant and the union hall he worked to establish and dedicated in his name upon his 2006 retirement, where the families of GM workers could gather.

Oscar spent his career as a labor leader putting into practice the lessons he learned in his youth. Humble and unassuming, nonetheless his words and actions carried great weight. He was well respected by labor, management and community. After retirement, Oscar dedicated his efforts to growing the Toledo Public Schools' Toledo Technology Academy to educate students in the skilled premier institution it has become. He remained an active participant in many community ventures.

Throughout his life both in public and private, Oscar Bunch sought to ensure a better life for the common man. He never forgot where he came from and carried with him his modest roots. He instilled those values in his own family. We wish for his wife, Ruby, his son and daughter Wes and Donna, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, his many friends, that they find some comfort in the memories they share and the gift of Oscar Bunch's life to them all, and for our entire community.

TRANSPARENCY AND EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR VETERAN CAREGIVERS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in strong support of S. 2216, the "Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act," (Team Act), which strengthens transparency and communication for veterans and caregivers participating in the program.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting and proper that the VA provides stipends and support to caregivers for wounded veterans.

To be eligible for this program, veterans must have sustained or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 and need personal care services for supervision and protection to help them with daily living activities.

Caregivers can include family members or other members of the veteran's support group that regularly help veterans recovering from injuries.

Unfortunately, according to reports, caregivers and veterans have been arbitrarily discharged or downgraded from the program, with benefits subsequently revoked or reduced—often with little explanation or time to appeal the decision.

In fact, the VA Office of the Inspector General reported in 2018 that VA failed to adequately manage the caregiver program and recommended improvements and reforms.

The TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act takes a number of steps to improve the program.

First, the legislation ensures that all caregivers are included in the veterans' medical records.

Currently, only certain caregivers participating in the Caregiver Support Program are included in veterans' medical records.

Including all caregivers in medical records strengthens communications between VA and caregivers and recognizes them as part of the clinical team.

Second, the legislation requires a minimum standard of information in downgrade notification letters in that it requires VA to provide an explanation of downgrade or termination decisions.

Caregivers have reported that their decision letters are sometimes missing important information that would be necessary to file an appeal.

Finally, the legislation extends benefits after certain veterans are deemed ineligible for the program.

Caregivers have reported being dropped shortly after receiving a termination letter without adequate time to appeal or make new accommodations.

This codifies a goal of maintaining care for an extended period of 150 days in certain cases where a veteran is terminated from the program.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is strongly endorsed by Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a charitable organization with the singular focus and mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.