

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF THE INCREASED TRANSPARENCY IN 501(C)(4) ORGANIZATIONS ACT OF 2020

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, I introduce the Increased Transparency in 501(c)(4) Organizations Act of 2020. This bill would require the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to make publicly available the forms organizations that self-declare under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) file with the IRS. Americans have the right to know which organizations are operating under this section of the IRC.

To be eligible for tax-exempt status under 501(c)(4), organizations, often referred to as "social welfare organizations," must be "devoted exclusively to charitable, educational, or recreational purposes." They can choose to apply for 501(c)(4) status from the IRS, or they can simply self-declare. Previously, organizations seeking to self-declare their 501(c)(4) status were not required even to notify the IRS of their existence. In 2015, however, the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 (the PATH Act) was enacted into law. Under that law, an organization seeking to self-declare their 501(c)(4) status now must file a notice with the IRS that it is operating under this section. The PATH Act did not, however, make the filed notices, Form 8976, subject to public disclosure.

The IRS has opined that Form 8976 cannot be made available under the Freedom of Information Act or other disclosure laws. This opinion creates a discrepancy between those organizations for which the IRS must make publicly available information—all Section 501(c)(3) organizations and 501(c)(4) organizations that applied that for status—and self-declared 501(c)(4) organizations. This discrepancy appears to have been inadvertently created by the PATH Act.

My bill would correct this oversight and mandate that the IRS publicly disclose any filed Form 8976 upon request, thus allowing the public to know which organizations operate under 501(c)(4), as they do with 501(c)(3) organizations. In the aftermath of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, which allows for unlimited expenditure in political campaigns from these "social welfare" groups, this bill is especially important to allow for greater transparency. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Madam Speaker, I wish to clarify my position on roll call votes cast on February 7, 2020.

On Roll Call Vote Number 54, on the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief and Puerto Rico Disaster Tax Relief Act, I did not vote. It was my intention to vote "Yea."

CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOMESTRETCH

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. BEYER. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the 30th anniversary of Homestretch, a Falls Church organization dedicated to empowering homeless families in Northern Virginia to secure permanent housing and to attain the knowledge, skills and hope they need to achieve lasting economic self-sufficiency.

Homestretch has assisted substantially in the efforts of Fairfax County and the City of Falls Church to end homelessness by providing housing and comprehensive services to over 1,000 homeless families with over 3,000 homeless children since its inception in 1990.

The organization contributes to the goals of One Fairfax by equipping families to escape homelessness and poverty permanently through programs that help them acquire skills and education, reduce debt and repair credit, enter lucrative career paths and restore their health.

Furthermore, Homestretch significantly contributes to the economic empowerment of homeless parents with children in Northern Virginia by launching them into such careers as nurses, chefs, teachers, accountants, realtors, dental assistants, pastors, commercial drivers, social workers, business analysts, pharmacy techs, master plumbers, restaurateurs, and auto mechanics.

In addition to its wide array of services for homeless families, Homestretch also provides quality early education for homeless and low-income children through its licensed preschool, Kidstretch, and ensures the educational success for youth in their program through its dedicated collaboration with the Fairfax County and Falls Church City Schools.

Homestretch has achieved unparalleled success in equipping homeless families to secure and maintain long term employment and permanent housing, with 90 percent families completing the program by moving into permanent housing that they can afford on income they earn; and with 95 percent of its graduates never returning to homelessness.

The organization enjoys deep community support with over 800 volunteers over 1,400 donors each year and demonstrates that dramatic transformation of lives is possible, given the right structure, support and opportunity.

I commend Homestretch's staff on their organization's 30th anniversary, I am sincerely grateful for their tireless efforts to improve the lives of many of Northern Virginia's most vulnerable families and for giving them the tools to succeed.

RACHEL CRANE MATHER SCHOOL

HON. JOE CUNNINGHAM

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Rachel Crane Mather, the founder of Beaufort's Mather School.

Rachel Mather moved to the Lowcountry in 1867 after the Civil War. She was a woman of faith and an educator. Mather hit the ground running as soon as she got to Beaufort and within a year, she opened her own institution. Her hopes and dreams came to life by serving others.

The book of Matthew, Chapter 11, verse 28 reads "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Led by faith and perseverance, Mather taught the weary and gave them food, housing, and rest during the southern Reconstruction Era.

The Mather School was a sanctuary for the young women in the Lowcountry and produced over a century of superior education in Rachel's name. As the matriarch of this institution, we honor the culture and legacy she has left today.

RECOGNIZING RONNIE RAKESTRAW

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding Mississippian, Ronnie Rakestraw.

Ronnie Rakestraw formerly served the public as the Union County East Post Justice Court Judge for over 32 years. During his extensive career, Ronnie saw many changes in the Mississippi court system. He was present when Union County decided to divide justice court judges into East and West Posts. Ronnie always remained a dedicated public servant and continued to put Mississippi first. He also served as a municipal court judge for the town of Sherman, Mississippi, for over 20 years.

I thank Ronnie for his lifelong dedication to the law and for making Mississippi a better place. I wish him many years of good health.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

HONORING MASTER CAPTAIN
WILLIAM WARD

HON. CHARLIE CRIST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. CRIST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Master Captain William Ward, of Florida, who passed away December 13, 2019 at the age of 57.

William was licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard as a Merchant Marine Officer in 1991. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida-College of Business in Accounting in 1994, and attained his Juris Doctor degree in 2013, from Barry University College of Law.

Mr. Ward was the President and C.E.O. of Captains Finest Seafood from 1994 to 2009, served on the Gulf Fisherman's Association board of directors since 2004, was the Vice President of Seafood Harvesters of America, and a board member with the Gulf Coast Leadership Conference. In addition, Mr. Ward was a member director of Fish for America, USA, representing and educating the millions of seafood consumers in the United States. His leadership and efforts earned him the title of Florida Businessman of the Year in 2001 and in 2004 as the National Business Council Chairman.

Mr. Ward advocated for sensible fisheries policy, including passage of the Port State Measures Agreement, which helped curb unregulated, unreported and illegal fishing. Additionally, Mr. Ward assisted in drafting legislation, advocating on its behalf, and consulting with state and federal governmental agencies in the development and implementation of protectionary natural resource regulations and rules. William also served as an expert consultant after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. He worked extensively on the passage of the Restore Act which provided the primary source of funding for the economic and ecological recovery of the Gulf States.

Mr. Ward represented the State of Florida as a two-time Gubernatorial Appointee to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission from 1999 to 2003. Further, William has served on numerous state and federal natural resources advisory panels, as well as two NOAA federal appointments serving on the advisory committees of the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council.

Later in life, William worked as an attorney on several successfully litigated state and federal court cases during his time as managing partner of Ward Consulting Partners, LLC, and the William Ward Law Group, PLLC. He also testified as an expert witness on marine fisheries cases in federal court, one of which prevailed in the U.S. Supreme Court.

During his career, William has consulted or worked with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Washington D.C., NOAA, Southeast Headquarters, NOAA, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Florida Institute of Oceanography, University of South Florida-College of Marine Science, University of Miami-Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Regional Coast Guard Headquarters in New Orleans, Miami, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater.

William Ward was well respected and cherished on Capitol Hill, among his peers on the water, in the legal community and in the environmental community. He was a great friend and compassionate advocate who worked tirelessly to protect the people and waters he loved. Thanks to his contributions and advocacy, our coastal environment and fisheries are more sustainable than before.

NATIONAL COURT REPORTING AND CAPTIONING WEEK

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. KIND. Madam Speaker, today, we recognize the Eighth Annual Court Reporters and Captioners Week. Approximately 48 million Americans are considered deaf or hard-of-hearing, and the captioning services that realtime writers and stenographic captioners ensure that all Americans have equal access to news and other vital information.

Realtime writers are highly trained professionals who share a unique ability to convert the spoken word to text that can be read, streamed, broadcast, searched, and archived. This specialization includes broadcast captioning and realtime translation services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, as well as providing near-instant translation in legal and other settings.

In the 116th Congress, I am proud to have reintroduced the Training for Realtime Writers Act, which reauthorizes the Training for Realtime Writers Grant Program and encourages careers in realtime writing and court reporting, provides scholarships for students, and modernizes curriculum to adapt to our changing world. I was proud to have my bill included in the 2008 Higher Education Act Reauthorization.

The Training for Realtime Writers Grant Program has been incredibly successful in training the current generation of captioners and court reporters and has aided in the rapid growth of these professions. By reauthorizing the Training for Realtime Writers grants, new students will have the opportunity to enter a technical, well-paid, and highly skilled career that will allow them to become court reporters and captioners immediately upon graduation.

From maintaining the integrity of our democracy to ensuring every citizen stays up to date on today's 24-hour news cycle, realtime writers are vital to Americans in all communities. Over the past decade, this program has encouraged a new generation of realtime writers to enter this vital field. I am proud to work with the National Court Reporters Association and with my friend Rep. Rodney Davis, to reauthorize this program so we can continue to increase awareness and interest in this profession.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARK REITER

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 10, 2020

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a friend and a giant in the recycling industry—Mark Reiter.

Mark was born and grew up in the Bronx—the South Bronx as he would say. Mark was an avid Brooklyn Dodgers fan. He later became a Nationals fan as a result of spending most of his life in Washington, D.C.; but make no mistake about it, Mark was a New Yorker through and through and never let you forget it.

Mark originally came to Washington to work for the late Bella Abzug. Mark would often entertain people with stories about those years working in her office. Representative Abzug was proud of Mark and his tireless devotion to environmental issues, as well as his commitment to others, especially those who were less fortunate. Later, Mark worked for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, helping shape our nation's environmental policy at its earliest stages. While he was a reliable Democrat, many of his friends were very reliable Republicans. He knew how to get things done by working with others, understanding others, and of course, caring for others.

One of Mark's great accomplishments was the enactment of the Superfund Recycling Equity Act (SREA), which provided environmental clarity for recyclers facing potential liability under Superfund. Because of SREA, recyclers today conduct due diligence to ensure their materials are used again in an environmentally responsible manner. SREA was a monumental achievement for responsible recycling and Mark was instrumental in its enactment.

Mark was fiercely loyal and devoted to his family—his brother, nephews, nieces, and their children. Mark would visit them often wherever they lived and generously help whenever needed. He was very proud of them all. He often spoke of his admiration of his parents and how their hard work enabled him to succeed in ways they could never have imagined, especially as they were recent immigrants to this great country. Mark never forgot where he came from and the sacrifices his parents made for him and his older brother Eli.

Mark helped so many colleagues from his beginnings on Capitol Hill through his long successful career at the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries. Many of his colleagues have gone on to great careers of their own as a result of Mark's tutelage and deep caring for them. I know because I am one of those colleagues who learned so much and was helped by Mark over the years.

Mark was also a man of faith. His Jewish faith helped him become a caring man to so many, whether they be family, friends, colleagues or strangers. People were simply people in Mark's eyes. Mark cared about how others were treated in our society and would speak up for them without reservation. He felt he had walked in their shoes before them and wanted life to be better for them.

Madam Speaker, we lost a giant in the recycling industry, the environmental community, and the Jewish community. Mark was a great colleague, a mentor, and a friend to many. His family and friends are so proud of who Mark became and what he left behind—a world he helped make better through his devotion to others, his work and his actions. Mark will be missed by so many.