

RECOGNITION OF EMILIE MA, PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS HONOREE

HON. ANDY BIGGS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Emilie Ma, a young student from my district who has been named an honoree in Arizona by the 2020 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. She was recognized for volunteering her time to help families struggling with poverty.

Ms. Ma assists with charitable efforts for low-income families at the Native Health Center. She donates her time to a club she founded at her school named the Modern Health Organization which provides services to patients with mental and physical needs. Ms. Ma has been an example to her peers, inspiring them to care for others and their communities.

We must encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions young citizens like Ms. Ma make in the lives of others. We all need more empathy. Everyone can work together to help the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers, like Ms. Ma, are inspiring examples to all of us and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREATER PHOENIX GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. RUBEN GALLEG0

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. GALLEG0. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Greater Phoenix Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (GPGCLCC). As one of the longest-standing LGBT agencies in our state, GPGCLCC has promoted an inclusive business environment by empowering and supporting LGBT and LGBT-allied businesses in Phoenix.

The GPGCLCC is the oldest non-profit LGBT chamber of commerce in the United States and has been recognized as one of the strongest and fastest growing in the nation. By expanding opportunities for its over 2,000 members and supporting Phoenix charitable organizations, the chamber has fostered economic justice within the LGBT community and a spirit of giving in the city's private sector. In addition to monthly professional development and networking events, the GPGCLCC encourages community engagement through events like "LGBT Night Out at the Ballet" and their Small Business Saturday Block Party. They have cultivated a well-rounded outlook in which businesses are not only economically beneficial to their community; they contribute to the culture and environment of their area as well.

As the organization celebrates its fortieth anniversary, I wish to congratulate the Greater Phoenix Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce on all of its achievements and thank them for their service to our city.

RECOGNIZING LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to take this moment to recognize Lithuanian Independence Day. The Lithuanian American Community, Inc., East Chicago Chapter, will be commemorating this special occasion with a celebratory event on Sunday, February 16, 2020, at the Chesterton Moose Lodge 1623 in Chesterton, Indiana.

On February 16, 1918, an Act of Independence was signed by the Council of Lithuania, which gave the country its independence from Germany. This day is proudly celebrated as State Independence Day. Lithuania maintained its independence until 1940 when it was annexed by Russia. The country remained under Soviet rule for almost fifty years before regaining its freedom in 1990. Independence Restoration Day is celebrated on March 11 each year in honor of Lithuania's reestablished independence. Lithuanians in Northwest Indiana and all over the world celebrate these days of independence with great enthusiasm and pride.

The members and leaders of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc., East Chicago Chapter, are to be honored, not only for their commitment to preserving tradition, but also for their dedication to civic, cultural, educational, and social programs. For their significant contributions to the community of Northwest Indiana and beyond, the members and leaders of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc., East Chicago Chapter, are worthy of the highest praise.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating Lithuanian Independence Day and honoring the members and leaders of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc., East Chicago Chapter, for their loyalty and dedication to their culture and traditions. The Lithuanian community has played a key role in enriching the quality of life and diversity of Northwest Indiana, and we are truly grateful for the organization's service to Northwest Indiana and beyond.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS A. BUSSIÈRE

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I am deeply honored to express my gratitude to Lieutenant General Thomas A. Bussiere for his years of dedicated service to the United States of America, the Air Force, and the great state of Alaska.

As Commander of Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region, Alaskan Command, and Eleventh Air Force, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, he is responsible for the integration of all military activities in the Alaskan joint operations area, operations to defend North American air sov-

ereignty from foreign military aviation incursions, and the planning and execution of all homeland defense operations within the area of responsibility.

In 1935 Brigadier General Billy Mitchell stated, "I believe that in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world. I think it is the most important strategic place in the world." Since taking command in August 2018, General Bussiere has expanded upon General Mitchell's sentiment and has become a tireless advocate for Alaska and Arctic readiness. So much so that he is the first Alaskan Command Commander to be designated as the USNORTHCOM Lead for Arctic Affairs.

Since graduating from the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps at Norwich University in 1985, General Bussiere has exemplified what it means to be an American Airman. However, he is more than the stars on his shoulders and the wings and ribbons on his chest that illustrate his military career. General Bussiere has also endeared himself to Alaska's communities. Additionally, he has continued to work with and advocate for Alaska Natives. In a show of respect, three Native communities bestowed Native names upon him; giving him the Inupiat name of Alongnonnuq, the Yup'ik name Evuneq, and the Tlingit name Litseenikaa.

On January 13, 2020, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper announced that the President nominated General Bussiere for assignment as Deputy Commander, U.S. Strategic Command. While I am saddened to see him leave Alaska, I am proud that he will continue serving as a sentinel for our Nation.

STANDING UP FOR SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, AND MEDICAID

HON. ANGIE CRAIG

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. CRAIG. Madam Speaker, the President's budget, released yesterday, proposed cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. I'll never stand for that. We have to make sure that we're protecting our seniors. We can't go back to a time when our seniors were living in poverty. We also have to make sure that we protect folks with disabilities.

I have authored a number of pieces of legislation that would reduce out-of-pocket costs and the price of prescription drugs. We can't support this budget, and I'll keep fighting to make sure that health care is affordable and that we take care of this nation's seniors.

HONORING MR. JAMIE WILLIS FOR HIS SERVICE TO OUR NATION

HON. ROGER WILLIAMS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor a great Texan and United States Army veteran, Jamie Willis of Copperas Cove, Texas.

Since 2016, Jamie has run Canes for Veterans Central Texas, an organization that creates free walking sticks for veterans in need.

While serving our country overseas as a cavalry scout in Operation Desert Storm, Jamie was involved in an accident that left him briefly paralyzed and now disabled, and wrestling with severe depression and PTSD. When he returned home, he would travel to the local VA for treatment where he was issued a cane to use that never held up. So, he decided to make his own out of repurposed Christmas trees.

An effort that started out as a necessity three years ago has now grown to a team of 60 volunteers who have made more than 220 canes. Jamie says crafting these canes is his true calling and they have brought him back from the brink of taking his own life—and he has changed the lives of those around him.

I want to honor Jamie today and thank him on behalf of the 25th District of Texas for his continued service to our nation. In God we trust.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOEL PACKER

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Joel Packer, a true hero for education and a dear friend.

Joel Packer is known across the education community as a champion for education funding. He spent more than 40 years advocating for students both in the public and private sector. Starting at the Student Association of the State University of New York, his career as an advocate grew with his work in D.C. at the National Education Association, and most recently, The Raben Group and the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) before his retirement in 2016.

Joel worked on critical issues like education funding, higher education, environmental hazards in schools, and civil rights. He was on the front lines of the push to improve testing in No Child Left Behind and was always there to remind us who we need to be prioritizing in the Congress: our children and their education. Joel championed the coalition of education advocates at CEF and masterfully represented the interests of a diverse group of educational institutions. Joel led the CEF's fight against education budget cuts in 2015, never giving up on his mission to ensure a genuine federal investment in our children's education. Throughout his career, Joel's dedication demonstrated the kind of intensity and willingness to collaborate necessary to win in the fight for education. Moreover, his passion for education and bettering the lives of all students was clear. Joel was an expert when it came to education policy and the Appropriations process; he knew, and helped all of us learn, how good ideas and good policies are not good enough—not without the necessary resources to make a difference.

I feel lucky to have known such a tremendous advocate for education in this country. Joel was many things—he was an amazing husband, a proud father and grandfather, an inspiring mentor and colleague, and an unwavering friend. Joel was taken from us too suddenly, and my deepest condolences go to his family. We will miss Joel and his bound-

less passion for fighting for what is right and for what our nation's children need most. Joel's values and mission will live on in those of us who remain in the fight, and we fight in his honor.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Joel Packer. He was a true champion for education and his leadership will never be forgotten.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAKU POGROMS: REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the victims of pogroms against the Armenian population in then-Soviet Azerbaijan thirty years ago: These attacks against Armenian Christians happened between 1988 and 1990 in the cities of Sumgait (February 27 to 29, 1988), Kirovabad (November 21 to 27, 1988) and the city of Baku (January 13 to 29, 1990).

It is clear that the pogrom of Armenians in Baku was not a spontaneous and one-time event, but the culmination of a series of ethnic violence waged against Armenians. In 1988, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave forcibly separated from Armenia and incorporated into Soviet Azerbaijan, began to voice their demand for reunification with Armenia. Their peaceful protests were reinforced by the February 20, 1988 vote by the Soviet of People's Deputies in Karabakh requesting the transfer of the region to Armenia. These events were taking place in the context of Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost. Unfortunately, Moscow and Azerbaijani authorities rejected these calls and strong anti-Armenian sentiment was whipped up, including calls for the death and ouster of the Armenian population.

On February 27, 1988, a massive pogrom was carried out in Sumgait where the Armenian population was brutally slaughtered and expelled. The Sumgait pogrom was followed by a pogrom in Kirovabad, the second largest city in Azerbaijan, where all the Armenians were expelled. After these tragedies, a massive migration of Armenians from Azerbaijan began, along with the migration of approximately 200,000 Azerbaijanis and Muslim Kurds who exited Armenia. By 1989, Armenians remaining in Azerbaijan stayed only in those places where they had well-established communities, as in Baku.

In January 1990, a series of Azerbaijani political rallies took place, and on January 13th, a crowd of about 50,000 divided into groups and began raiding and invading Armenian homes, brutalizing the inhabitants, including women and children, and destroying and burning houses, businesses and other community structures. The rallying cry was to cleanse the city of Armenians. The violence, killings, rapes, beatings, looting and forcible expulsion of Armenians persisted between January 13th and 20th. It is still unknown the exact number of people killed, but estimates place the death toll around 450 people. Throughout it all, local militia and Soviet troops stood by as the violence escalated over a week's time. Not until

the evening of January 20th, after most of the Armenian population had fled or been expelled from Baku, did the Soviet Army intervene to stop the seven-day massacre.

Garry Kasparov was born in Baku in 1963. His mother was Armenian. In 1985, he became the youngest ever World Chess Champion. In January 1990, he was excelling in his competitions, and ranked as the No. 1 chess player in the world. Yet in January 1990, he bravely returned to Baku, into the midst of massacre and carnage, to rescue and evacuate the families of his friends and relatives. Describing those events, he has testified that:

"No one would halt the Armenian pogroms in Baku, although there were eleven thousand soldiers of internal troops in the city. No one would intervene until the ethnic cleansing was carried out. The pogroms were happening not in a random place, but in the huge capital city with blocks of flats. In such a megapolis as Baku, the crowd simply cannot carry out targeted operations like that. When the pogrom-makers go purposefully from one district to another, from one apartment to another, this means that they had been given the addresses and that they had a coordinator."

I don't mean to simplify the complex history and people of this region, but these pogroms set the stage for more than two decades of aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenians, during which Azerbaijan initiated and lost a war against Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan's persecution of Armenians continues even today in attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh, now known as the Republic of Artsakh.

There has yet to be an independent investigation of the events that occurred between 1988 and 1990 that emptied Azerbaijan of its Armenian population. No one has been held accountable for the violence and the deaths. Azerbaijan remains in turmoil because of the fanaticism and thirst to ethnically cleanse the entire region of Armenian Christians.

The U.S. Congress forcefully spoke out during the period of 1988 to 1990 against these massacres and expulsions of Armenians by Azerbaijan. We have rejected the Azeri war against Nagorno Karabakh and stood in solidarity with the Armenian people of Artsakh. We will continue to do so.

Madam Speaker, today I remember all the victims and I honor all the survivors of these terrible acts of ethnic cleansing. May all the people of Armenia and Artsakh live in peace and freedom for which they have sacrificed and suffered so much.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HARLEY ROUDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I missed votes on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 as I was traveling after attending a memorial service in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call Vote No. 57 (On Ordering the Previous Question): YEA; Roll Call Vote No. 58 (On Agreeing to H. Res. 844): YEA; and Roll Call Vote No. 59 (On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 1980, as Amended): YEA.