

SHERRY ELLEBRACHT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sherry Ellebracht, who after 22 years working for the Regional Transportation District (RTD), is retiring. Sherry's dedication to transportation for the State of Colorado has made a significant impact which will last for years to come.

In 1998, Sherry joined RTD's government relations department working to engage with local, state and federal leaders on issues related to transit and transportation in Colorado.

In her role, Sherry managed all state and federal activities and monitored proposed legislation in the Colorado state legislature and in the U.S. House and Senate. At the federal level, one of her primary responsibilities involves coordinating the agency's annual appropriations requests and authorizations in the transportation funding bills. In addition, she monitored all municipal activities and worked with the RTD local government liaison to stay abreast of local issues, including representing RTD on the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) Board of Directors and even serving as President of the organization. She has been a part of RTD for the passage of two significant public votes, 4A for the SE corridor and FasTracks, as well as FFGAs for the Southeast (\$525 million), West (\$308 million) and Eagle P3 lines (\$1.03 billion) and over \$257 million in federal funding for Union Station—a total of close \$2 billion in federal funding.

Outside of her work at RTD, Sherry is a member of the Alpha Delta Pi sorority alumnae and has held various positions in that organization. In 2008, she was nominated for the Denver Area Panhellenic Alumnae Achievement Award. Through her work with RTD and other groups, Sherry has created numerous partnerships and helped improve outcomes in the transit community and for the quality of life of the residents of Colorado. I congratulate Sherry on a lifetime of service and wish her all the best in retirement.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP AND
LEGACY OF CHAIRWOMAN NITA
M. LOWEY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the remarkable leadership of Chairwoman NITA M. LOWEY. NITA has made the nation, and the world, a far better place because of her commitment to the Appropriations Committee, and her outstanding achievements will forever be honored and celebrated here in the Congress.

I cherish the 25 years we have spent together fighting for expanded access to women's health, the inclusion of women in NIH clinical trials, increased investment in early childhood education, adequate worker protections, and so much more. Beyond her professionalism, dedication, and leadership, NITA is

genuine and compassionate. As she has for many of our other colleagues, she has been there for me in times of need. I will miss seeing her in the halls of Congress and on the Appropriations Committee, but our friendship endures.

In honor of her outstanding legacy, I include in the RECORD the Chairwoman's farewell remarks to the House Appropriations Committee on July 15, 2020, the final day of markups for the 116th Congress:

Good morning, everyone. As we begin our final day of consideration of the FY21 spending bills, I'd like to thank you all for your kind words and well wishes and ask you to indulge me in just a few more reflections.

I came to Congress in 1989, one of just 31 women in the House and Senate, and to this Committee in 1993 alongside only six other women on the 64-member panel.

This body is better for the 100 women serving in the 116th Congress and for the many women in this room today. It's my honor to address the full Committee for my final time as the first woman Chair.

You know, it's ironic that back in 1993, I had to choose between serving on Appropriations or Ways and Means. And today we mark up my final Appropriations bills in the Ways and Means Committee room.

I chose Appropriations because I believed it was the best place to give more people a better chance at a better life. After nearly 30 years on Committee, I still believe that.

In fact, nowhere else in Congress could I have advanced such a diverse range of priorities. In the days of congressionally directed spending—something I hope you all restore—I brought home hundreds of millions to help my constituents directly, from transportation hubs and commuter services, bridge and road safety, early learning and health centers, to economic development and job training, school safety, senior centers, flooding relief, and more.

Of course, without those projects, I have created new programs, including one that protects vulnerable nonprofits at a time of rising anti-Semitism and hate, like those in my district surrounding the community that experienced a tragic attack at a Hanukkah party last year.

Nationally, we advanced the .08 blood alcohol content standard for drunk driving that has saved countless lives. Following September 11th, we funded the new Department of Homeland Security, and I have fought hard for New York's fair share of its investments in our preparedness and response capabilities.

I am so proud of tremendous accomplishments for women's health—from protecting and expanding access to family planning here and abroad, to gains in research equity and breast cancer research and securing contraceptive coverage for federal employees that led to dramatically expanded coverage for women today. And, let me just say, we will never go back to the days when NIH excluded women from clinical trials—when even the lab rats were all male.

Among many education achievements, we established the first federal afterschool programs that have grown to a billion dollar investment today and served millions of children and families. And, it was certainly fun to bring Bert and Ernie to a hearing to help save PBS's federal funding.

Despite my passion for these priorities, I bucked conventional wisdom to become Ranking Member on the State and Foreign Operations subcommittee rather than the Labor-HHS-Education subcommittee. I cannot overstate my commitment to our responsible investments through our foreign aid bill that make the world better, safer, and

healthier while improving the security of generations here at home.

At the heart of that work is providing a basic education to the world's children so that they may thrive and prosper, be healthier and resilient to dangerous influences, and create a more stable world. So what a moving and rewarding honor it was to have my dear friends Ranking Member Granger and Ranking Member Rogers recognize my work on international basic education by naming that program for me last week in the State and foreign operations markup.

While my time as the Chairwoman of this Committee has been short, our achievements together will have a lasting impact.

Despite our differences and disagreements, or perhaps because of them, we ultimately recognize that the power of the purse—one of the most important entrusted to us by the Constitution—requires us to build consensus and put the interests of the American people first.

I took the Appropriations gavel in January 2019, in the middle of the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history.

Not only did we reach bipartisan agreement to reopen government, we cleared all 12 fiscal year 2020 appropriations bills through committee and 10 off the House floor before the Senate introduced a single bill, and we enacted all 12 before the end of the calendar year.

As appropriators, we lead by example, with common sense and deliberation.

Our ability to transcend party differences and make hard choices within the constraints of limited funding makes us worthy of the privilege to hash out the biggest battles of the day.

Through virtual and remote work and in masks and gloves today, this Committee is confronting twin crises—one most of us never expected, the other only the willfully indifferent could not have anticipated.

In recent months, we have led the way to invest trillions to stem the spread of a global pandemic and mitigate the worst of its devastating economic impacts.

The fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills continue those efforts even as we address systemic racism, a crisis that has reached a boiling point in recent weeks.

We have acted on the urgent need for meaningful police reform and economic development in disadvantaged communities that is fundamental to a more just and equitable society that lives up to our highest values and aspirations.

We are living through a time of heightened cynicism and polarization, of suffering and pain, and great uncertainty, with too little compassion and leadership from some at the highest levels of power.

The old adage you might have heard me say a time or two—that in Washington there are Republicans, Democrats, and appropriators—is perhaps more important now than ever.

My parting request to you is this: do not succumb to the pervasive partisanship that permeates what can feel like all aspects of our professional—and even sometimes our personal—lives.

Beyond keeping government's doors open and lights on, conduct robust oversight and demand accountability and transparency on the use of taxpayer dollars, defend our constitutional prerogatives against Executive Overreach regardless of who occupies the White House or the Speaker's office. Always strive to use the power of the purse to unlock the full potential of this nation.

Over the next weeks and months, I will continue that hard work with all of you, who are at the heart of what makes this the best Committee in Congress. If you're looking for

a goodbye gift, I would love to get all our bills done by the end of the year.

To the other members leaving Congress at the end of this term—my fellow New Yorker and dear friend Jose Serrano, Pete Visclosky, Tom Graves, Martha Roby, and Will Hurd—thank you for your service, and I wish you all the very best.

To my subcommittee chairs—Marcy, Pete, José, Rosa, David, Lucille, Sanford, Betty, Tim, Debbie, and Mike—you have made your mark not just on your bills and on this Committee. Thank you for your steady, effective leadership and friendship.

Kay, I could not ask for a better Ranking Member. We took turns as Chair and Ranking Member on State and Foreign Operations and have shown time and again that women get things done. I will deeply miss our partnership and you personally.

I would be remiss not to mention former Committee Chairs Natcher, Livingston, Young, Lewis, Obey, Rogers, and Frelinghuysen who showed me what it takes to do this job well.

None of us could fulfill our mandate without the support of excellent staff. All of the successes I've recounted today and more are also the achievements of many others.

To the staff in both the Committee and my Congressional office: For a year and a half as Chairwoman, six years as Ranking Member—and for some, a whole lot longer—I have benefitted immeasurably from your wisdom, counsel, tireless commitment, and, on more than a few occasions, from your technological prowess.

One of the benefits of being chair is having the largest and most experienced staff on the Hill. From all of our subcommittee staff led by clerks Martha Foley, Bob Bonner, Becky Leggieri, Jaime Shimek, Matt Smith, Darek Newby, Rita Culp, Stephen Steigleder, Robin Juliano, Matt Washington, Lisa Molyneux, Steve Marchese, and Joe Carlile to Adam Berg, Jason Gray, Adam Wilson, Tom Tucker, Anna Hansen, Mike Burns, Gloria Nlewedim, and Malachi White in the front office, I am grateful for everything you do to make this the best committee in Congress.

My Congressional office staff in Washington, including Fae Rabin, Wendy Coursen, Liz Gauthier, Jane Richter, Matt Pastore, Steve Brenner, and Justin Barnes, have been invaluable during my final appropriations markups, as always.

I especially note my gratitude for the extraordinary work of several staffers with whom I work most closely: Staff Director and Clerk Shalanda Young, Deputy Staff Director Chris Bigelow—an alum of my personal office, Communications Director Evan Hollander, Legislative Director Dana Acton, Deputy Chief of Staff Kelly Heaton, and my Chief of Staff for the last 15 years, Elizabeth Stanley.

I appreciate the great contributions of former staff, including chiefs of staff—Scott Fleming, Howard Wolfson, Matthew Traub and Clare Coleman—and legislative teams led by Jim Townsend, Mark Isaac, Jenny Luray, Heather Howard, Beth Tritter, and Jean Doyle. At the committee, I valued the expertise of former Staff Director David Pomerantz, Deputy Staff Director Lesley Turner, and Communications Director Matt Dennis who also served in my personal office.

I have enjoyed seeing so many current and former staffers grow in your careers, get married, have children, and even some of you retire before me. You will always be a part of the Lowey family.

It has been the honor of my life to serve as Chairwoman of this committee. While I'll be sad to hand over the gavel, I know that all of us—members and staff—will live by the underlying principle that has guided our work together: do the best we can to make life better for the most people we can.

Thank you.

HONORING JUDGE OLA M. LEWIS

HON. DAVID ROUZER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory and life of a trailblazing judge from Brunswick County, North Carolina, who was passionate and fearless in her commitment to justice and the law while also showing great compassion for those who needed help to get their lives back on track. Sadly, Judge Ola M. Lewis passed away late last year. This past Saturday, July 11th, would have been her 55th birthday.

The daughter of a paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division and two public school principals, Judge Lewis learned early in life the value of education, hard work, and service to one's community. She grew up in Spring Lake, North Carolina, and soon moved with her family to Brunswick County. Like her father, she graduated from Fayetteville State University and then in 1990 earned a law degree from North Carolina Central Law School. After a stint in private practice she returned home to Brunswick County to serve in the District Attorney's Office.

Just two years later, in 1993, Judge Lewis was appointed district court judge becoming the youngest serving district court judge in North Carolina. She spent seven years as a district court judge before being appointed to serve as a "special Superior Court judge", traveling around 21 North Carolina counties. Her motto: "have gavel, will travel".

She made history as both the first woman and the first African-American judge in North Carolina's Fourteenth Judicial District. She is the longest serving female judge in the history of North Carolina.

Judge Lewis has left a real impact in our community that will continue to be felt. She fostered the creation of specialized drug treatment and mental health courts, which have helped countless those that need it the help necessary to put themselves back on the right track. Her drug court program became a national template that has been replicated to help others struggling with addiction and mental health challenges nationwide.

She was one of the first to see and respond to the scourge of the opioid addiction that has ravaged the nation, co-founding in 2017 the Brunswick County Opioid Addiction Task Force. She encouraged Governor Roy Cooper to declare the growing opioid addiction crisis a statewide public health emergency.

In recognition of her contributions and dedication to our local communities and to our state, she was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Governor Cooper, the Old North State Award by Governor Beverly Purdue, and the Dogwood Award by Attorney General Josh Stein.

Madam Speaker, Judge Ola Lewis leaves a legacy for which her wonderful family, colleagues and friends can be proud. Hers was a great life of service to the benefit of every citizen, our communities, and our state.

HONORING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY MEMORIAL POST 8788 VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rio Grande Valley Memorial Post 8788 Veterans of Foreign Wars for their incredible 50-year record of serving our veterans and the community of McAllen, Texas.

The Rio Grande Valley Memorial Post 8788 Veterans of Foreign Wars celebrated their 50th anniversary in March of this year, but I am here to recognize Post 8788's Honor Guard, which was established in the late 1970's.

Honor Guards volunteer to give proper ceremonial funerals to veterans who die. The term "Honor guard" is used because the veterans feel it is a great honor to provide their fellow veterans with military funeral services and pay their final respects. They feel they have been blessed to survive the horrors of war and this is their way of giving back to their fellow brothers and sisters.

Although I do not have the records for all of the services conducted since the post's inception, Post 8788 has conducted 367 services since 2018. Altogether, these services are the compilation of 7,418 volunteer hours and 6,035 miles traveled to perform the military funerals. You can imagine these numbers are much larger given the fact that this represents only 2.5 years out of a 40-year history.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today to acknowledge the decades' long achievements of the Rio Grande Valley Memorial Post 8788 Veterans of Foreign Wars. Each member of the Rio Grande Valley Memorial Post 8788 Veterans of Foreign Wars is an incredible leader in our community, and their legacy will no doubt inspire public service and volunteerism of future generations.

SUPPORTING THE DBE PROGRAM

HON. ANTHONY G. BROWN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2020

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Madam Speaker, I rise to say a few words in support of the DBE program. This program helps firms owned by women and minorities are included as partners in helping build and maintain our nation's transportation infrastructure. The chairman and many of my colleagues have presented the devastating statistics that demonstrate how far we must go before we abolish business discrimination based on race and gender. I would like to highlight some of the voices behind those statistics. In a recent study in my home state of Maryland, the authors conducted in depth interviews with business owners from across the state on this very issue. When asked about the persistence of discrimination, one business owner said: "My business card had my picture on it, and so someone said to me, 'Oh, whatever you do, don't put your picture on your card.' And I said, 'Why?' . . . They said, 'Because you'll