

Scout from the Bucks County Council and former president of that council and was honored with the Silver Beaver Award for his service to scouting.

Mike retired in 2017 and was consistently ranked among the most bipartisan Members of Congress.

I lift my prayers for Mike's wife, Kathleen; their six children; his brother, Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK; and the Fitzpatrick family during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, it is also appropriate to celebrate the tremendous accomplishments and difference Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick made in a relatively short life.

Well done, my friend. Rest in God's loving arms.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to honor the life and the accomplishments of Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick. He was a great and trusted colleague. More importantly, he was a good friend, and he was my friend.

He didn't seek the spotlight; he just sought to do the right thing.

He was all about representing his district. Representing his district put him at odds, oftentimes, with popular sentiment around here, but Mike wasn't bothered by any of that. He was true to his convictions; he was true to his family; and he was true to his friends.

Guys like Mike Fitzpatrick who come here, serve, and stay focused on what is important and stay true are hard to find and even harder to replace.

We wish God's blessing on Mike Fitzpatrick and his entire family. We pray the Lord will fill the intolerable emptiness of his passing.

I would just like to say: We miss you, Mike Fitzpatrick, and Godspeed.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER).

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I as well rise today to pay tribute to our friend, the Honorable Michael G. Fitzpatrick, a longtime Republican who served as a Bucks County, Pennsylvania, commissioner and served as a Member of the United States House of Representatives, who, sadly, passed away Monday, January 6.

Mike was the oldest son of eight children, born on June 28, 1963, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He grew up and resided in Bucks County. Mike was an Eagle Scout, an Eagles fan, and a graduate of Dickinson Law School.

Those who knew Mike said the same thing: He worked hard every day to make his constituents' lives better.

First elected to Congress in 2004, he served four terms and then stepped down, honoring his self-imposed pledge to term limits. Mike's brother, BRIAN FITZPATRICK, succeeded his older brother and continues to serve their home district honorably. BRIAN is a great Member and a friend to us all.

Mike was described by a friend as a classic Bucks County Irishman and a man whose family always came first.

Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK and the entire Fitzpatrick family appreciate our prayers. Mike is survived by, in addition to his brother BRIAN, his six other brothers and sisters; his parents, James and Mary; a grandson; a granddaughter; his wife of 31 years, Kathleen; and their six children.

I thank you for your work to make Pennsylvania and our country a better place, Congressman Fitzpatrick.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE).

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the legacy of former Pennsylvania Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick.

Mike was a dedicated public servant who proudly represented the people of Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District, showcasing incredible courage not only in Congress but throughout his life.

This week, former Congressman Fitzpatrick passed away after a valiant battle with metastatic melanoma. As a dermatologist, I have witnessed this disease claim many lives and devastate too many families. Here in Congress, it is my privilege to serve as co-chair of the Skin Cancer Caucus, and I remain dedicated to promoting innovative treatments and cures for melanoma.

On behalf of the 13th District of Pennsylvania, I am grateful to Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick for his longstanding service to our Commonwealth and to our entire Nation.

As we honor him today, I extend my sincere sympathies to the entire Fitzpatrick family, including my friend, Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK, upon the loss of a great leader from Pennsylvania and a great leader in our Nation.

RELEASE FUNDS FOR PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday morning, southwest Puerto Rico was struck by a 6.4 magnitude earthquake.

That seismic event followed hundreds of smaller quakes that had rattled the region since December 28. However, Tuesday's quake inflicted enormous damage, causing a school to collapse, killing at least one person, and leaving almost the entire island without power.

Indeed, today, Puerto Rico's largest power generation facility, Costa Sur, remains offline as we speak. That power plant is responsible for 40 percent of electricity generation on the island. Even as of last night, more than two-thirds of Puerto Ricans had no electricity.

Mr. Speaker, 250,000 Puerto Ricans were without water. Hundreds of homes

were damaged. As of last night, more than 5,200 Puerto Ricans were sleeping on the street, afraid their homes could collapse on them.

For the people of Puerto Rico, this natural disaster evokes dark memories seared in our minds of how this administration and the Federal Government failed, turning a natural disaster into a humanitarian crisis.

In 2017, because of this administration's incompetence and indifference, the Puerto Rican people suffered immensely. They endured the longest blackout in American history, and 3,000 of our fellow citizens lost their lives. We cannot afford to repeat those mistakes.

Sadly, today, this administration's disdain for the people of Puerto Rico remains on full display, this time in the form of previously approved funds that it is withholding. In response to Hurricanes Maria and Irma, Congress passed \$8.3 billion in HUD relief and mitigation funding, resources that HUD to this day refuses to release. Let me repeat that: The Secretary of HUD is violating the law, scoffing at congressional intent, and blocking the people of Puerto Rico from receiving previously approved disaster funds. This comes even after another disaster has stricken the island.

We do not know yet how bad the devastation from this earthquake will be. We also do not know if there will be yet more earthquakes. But this is certain: It is unacceptable, especially now, for Secretary Carson and HUD to stand in the way of Puerto Rico's receiving previously allocated assistance. It is also illegal.

Mr. Speaker, these are our fellow citizens. They deserve our compassion and our assistance. When wildfires or earthquakes hit California or hurricanes strike Texas, Americans stand together and assist one another. They give each other the helping hand that they deserve. But when it comes to Puerto Rico, this administration instead chooses to stand in the way, to block necessary aid, and to put lives at risk.

Mr. Speaker, if these funds are not released and if Puerto Rican people perish in the aftermath of this earthquake, then I have to say that it will be the U.S. Federal Government that is responsible.

We cannot afford further delay. HUD must release these funds immediately, and FEMA must get to work, helping Puerto Rico recover from the latest catastrophe.

RECOGNIZING ALLEN BEERMANN'S RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Allen Beermann, who is retiring from his

longtime position as the executive director of the Nebraska Press Association after having been Nebraska's secretary of state for 24 years.

Through his 48 years of public service, Allen has been an example of dignity and a source of inspiration to countless Nebraskans. Allen is well known across Nebraska and even around the world for his commitment to his work and his affinity for meeting new people.

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As a Nebraska Secretary of State, he worked tirelessly to protect the integrity of our elections. He brought this commitment to integrity with him into his next role as executive director of the Nebraska Press Association as well.

He has traveled to many countries and met with people from all walks of life, establishing relationships with everyone he meets along the way. Allen likes to say his career took him to "48 countries in 48 years," and I am sure he has no shortage of stories from these trips.

I have known Allen for many years, and I can say, in addition to his hard work, Allen has always been a great person to be around. Allen is always one to lighten a conversation with his quick wit and positive attitude, and his many friends around the world are a testament to his character. He has even been known to poke fun at himself a little bit, stating, recently, that the Nebraska Historical Society has recognized him as the "official State artifact."

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Mr. Allen Beermann's commendable public service, and wish him good luck in his retirement.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I speak from the heart about someone who was not just a colleague but a good friend. We heard some of my Republican colleagues, also from Pennsylvania, speaking about Mike Fitzpatrick earlier.

I had the privilege to say that I was Mike's constituent for a few years. Under the old, old lines in Pennsylvania, he represented a portion of Philadelphia in the far northeast, where I reside. He and I became friends when I was a State representative and he was my Congressman.

We quickly realized we had so much in common: similar sort of families, both born in Philadelphia, both proud Irish American families, both went to Catholic high school—Mike went to Bishop Egan, now Conwell-Egan; I went to Cardinal Dougherty. So it was not exactly difficult for the two of us to get along and to work so well together,

especially when I would become a Member of Congress and he immediately reached out to me and helped in any way he could.

As colleagues, we worked well together on a whole host of issues. Our districts shared the entire Philadelphia-Bucks County border and then much of the Montgomery County-Bucks border as well.

When I think of Mike, though, it is not so much the water safety issues and PFOS that we worked on or transportation or so many issues that affect northeast Philadelphia, Bucks County-Montgomery County. What really strikes me is just what a nice and decent person Mike was and his basic human decency. You see those same traits in his brother, now our colleague, BRIAN.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am deep in mourning today for Mike, his wife, Kathleen, his six children, Mike's parents, including his father, whom I had the opportunity to spend time with and meet this summer. My heart breaks for the Fitzpatrick family, but I hope that they can take solace in the fact that Mike left his mark on this institution.

Mr. Speaker, to also speak about the life of Mike Fitzpatrick, I yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY), my friend and colleague.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BOYLE.

Frankly, it is my honor and privilege to join the Pennsylvania delegation as they honor their friend and mine, Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Speaker, Congressman BOYLE would appreciate this. I had never heard of Bucks County until I came to Congress, but I learned of it quickly because of a young Congressman named Mike Fitzpatrick, who consistently talked about his home, his relationship with the people whom he served, whom he loved, whom he was devoted to.

The gentleman gave some beautiful, generous comments about the nature of his character: He was devoted to his family; he was a man of high principle; he was personable. I think it is important to point out as well: The gentleman is a Democrat; he was a Republican; I am a Republican. And here we are, talking about things that actually unite us because of the character of people, good Americans like Mike Fitzpatrick, who looked for a way to be in authentic dialogue—while standing on his principles. He was a fighter, as well, but looked for a way to be in authentic dialogue, even with people he might have a disagreement with.

He was my friend. I remember in that corner back there, we had a very intimate conversation one day of how he was facing a true dilemma because there was a vote that was about to be taken, for which he said, "This may cost me my election." He took that vote anyway, and it did cost him the election, but then he came back and joined us again.

Mr. Speaker, let me join with Congressman BOYLE and the entire Penn-

sylvania delegation in expressing my condolences to Kathleen and his six kids, whom he talked about and whom we got to know as well.

Being from Nebraska, again, I am a long way from Bucks County, but learned a great deal about the gentleman's home and, of course, the deep character and the place that formed this wonderful public servant, Mike Fitzpatrick.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I, too, as all of my colleagues, not just Pennsylvanians, but all the others, stand up to speak about a young man, because he was a young man, Congressman Michael Fitzpatrick.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember him not as just a departed colleague from the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but he was also a good person. He was someone whom I knew from the fact that, when I was in the State legislature and he was a Congressman, that although I was not in his congressional district, I knew him very much as a person. I knew his leadership; I knew what he provided; and I knew his friendliness.

He, both, was a principled conservative and comfortable working with people on both sides of the aisle. That is how he got things done, including the creation of the Washington Crossing National Cemetery.

He also led the effort to better secure passenger planes from terrorism, a cause inspired by September 11 families from Bucks County.

Bucks County was very close to the congressional district in the legislative district I represented. Limekiln Pike is something that led up directly to Bucks County. So Mike was not a stranger to the issues in the southeast part of Pennsylvania, as well as the city of Philadelphia, as well as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

My fellow Democrats from this district all remember him as a true patriot, a father to Bucks County, a man of grace and honor who looked past politics in the community.

There is a quote from my departed colleague, and this is what he said: "Some legislators look back at how many bills they passed. I measure my time by how many people I helped."

That was a quote that Mike has stated, and I think it is important if all of us remember this. So, in that spirit, we from Pennsylvania stand with that spirit of Michael Fitzpatrick. It is safe to say he helped a lot of people.

Mr. Speaker, to BRIAN and his family, please know that you are in our prayers and our thoughts. We don't take that lightly. We understand it. I say to you that I am honored to be a part of the delegation of people who are standing here today to add my voice to the importance of what Michael Fitzpatrick meant to this body and to this country, and I thank him.