EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DAVID TWA

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today with Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, and Congressman ERIC SWALWELL to recognize the service of an esteemed leader in Contra Costa County, David Twa.

David began his career as a public servant in Minnesota where he served as a county manager and county attorney. With significant experience under his belt, David moved to California and was appointed as the Contra Costa County Administrator in 2008. In this role, David has managed 24 departments, agencies, and special districts; over 10,000 employees; and a multibillion-dollar budget.

During his tenure as County Administrator, David worked to implement the County's goals and improve the lives of its residents. One of David's many accomplishments is helping the County achieve a AAA bond rating from Standard and Poor's in 2013. David's legacy extends beyond his job description. He was dedicated to career development for County staff and worked to create leadership opportunities for employees, including helping establish the Contra Costa Local Government Leadership Academy in 2014. Throughout his many years with Contra Costa County, David has inspired his colleagues and peers to continue working to improve our community. In 2018, David won the Distinguished Service Award from the California Association of County Executives, a testament to his career and service.

David is known by his colleagues as a dedicated and respected leader. Please join me and Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, and Congressman ERIC SWALWELL in thanking David for his service to our County and wishing him the best in his retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE MARK MYERS

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor the life of former City of Weston Commissioner, Mark Myers.

I was heartbroken to learn of his passing and join my community in celebrating his life. Commissioner Myers was one of the original founders of my hometown of Weston, FL, serving on the first City Commission in 1997. In November 1991, Mr. Myers was elected to serve as Treasurer on the Board of Supervisors, the panel that helped to incorporate the City of Weston in 1996. His life is part of the fabric of our South Florida history, and we are grateful for his service.

Mark always emphasized supporting our community's young people as well as improving access to the arts. He was instrumental in expanding cultural and economic opportunities for a new community and even helped design the City of Weston seal. Mr. Myers was an avid art collector and advocate supporting numerous organizations whose work helped improve our surroundings.

Commissioner Myers was a graduate of Cornell University and also served our nation with distinction as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force.

I join Mark's children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and my friends and neighbors in mourning the loss of an incredible advocate, visionary, and devoted public servant. May his memory be a blessing.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF DOCK GABBERT

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Dock Gabbert who passed away on December 30. Dock dedicated his life to serving the people of Mississippi and his legacy will be long remembered.

Born on July 30, 1942 in Banner, MS to Dock and Rena Gabbert, Dock went on to graduate from Bruce High School. In 1960, he married Gloria Kay Ramage and spent 25 years with Willis Engineering. He also served in the Mississippi Army National Guard. Dock was known for his deep love for the outdoors. He went on hunting trips with friends that took him across the country. He could often be found fishing or working in his yard. His love for his community was at the forefront of all he did.

Dock began his career in public service in 1967 on the Derma Board of Alderman. In 1969, he was elected mayor of Derma, where he ultimately served 51 years making him Mississippi's longest serving mayor. He won 14 elections, one by only a two-vote margin. He took pride in his contributions to the city infrastructure and his part in making Denna an enjoyable city to live in. His tenure allowed continuity in local projects and his impact on the quality of life in Derma will endure.

Dock Gabbert was an outstanding Mississippian who exemplified a commitment to public service. He dedicated his life to making life better for his community. I am grateful for men like Dock who so humbly served our great state, and my deepest condolences are with those who loved him.

STEM OPPORTUNITIES ACT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to be joined by Ranking Member LUCAS in introducing the STEM Opportunities Act.

The need for full engagement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by women and other underrepresented groups goes beyond enabling individuals to fulfill their dreams of becoming a scientist. As the global competition in science and technology continues to intensify, the lack of diversity in the U.S. STEM workforce creates a significant drag on our own capacity to innovate. Our future prosperity depends on what we do now to nurture the STEM talent that will be necessary to keep pace with our competitors and deliver benefits to all Americans.

Study after study has shown that the underrepresentation of women, and racial and ethnic minorities is not attributable to a lack of interest or talent. Institutional and cultural barriers, including discrimination, harassment, unconscious bias in hiring and promotion, limited access to the internet, poor mentoring, and limited support networks serve to disadvantage, marginalize, and push talented individuals at all education and career levels to abandon their interest in pursuing STEM careers. Unfortunately, the COVID–19 crisis has only exacerbated these challenges.

The goal of the STEM Opportunities Act is to develop and implement evidence-based policies to promote the advancement of women, minorities, and other groups underrepresented in STEM studies and research careers. This bill is focused on identifying and lowering barriers for those who have already chosen a STEM path. First, so that we better understand the nature and scope of the challenges, the STEM Opportunities Act requires more comprehensive demographic data collection on the recipients of federal research awards and on STEM faculty at U.S. universities. These data would be available to researchers to study the participation and trajectories of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM so that policy makers can design more effective policies and practices to reduce barriers.

Next, this bill requires the development of consistent federal policies, such as no-cost award extensions, for recipients of federal research awards who have caregiving responsibilities, including care for a newborn or newly adopted child and care for a sick family member. The bill also requires consistent federal guidance to grant reviewers and program officers on best practices to minimize the effects of implicit bias in the review of federal research grants. It requires OSTP to develop guidance for universities and Federal laboratories to aid them in identifying any cultural

and institutional barriers limiting the recruitment, retention, and achievement of women, minorities, rural students, and other underrepresented groups in academic and government STEM research careers and in developing and implementing current best practices for reducing such barriers. Finally, the legislation authorizes NSF to award grants to universities to implement or expand research-based practices targeted specifically at increasing the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty.

The STEM Opportunities Act has been a priority of mine for well over a decade. Every Congress since 2007 I have worked to raise awareness among my colleagues about the urgent challenges this bill addresses. While we were successful in passing this bill out of the House last year, we have yet to garner the necessary support to advance this bill in the Senate. I am hopeful that this year will be different. I am honored to be joined by my good friend, Ranking Member LUCAS, again in this effort and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to get this bill to the President's desk.

I want to thank Ranking Member LUCAS for his continued partnership in advancing thoughtful solutions to the challenges we face in maintaining our standing as the global leader in science and innovation. The STEM workforce is the bedrock of this effort and, in the wake of the COVID–19 crisis, the need to act is more urgent than ever. I encourage the rest of our colleagues to join us and to help us move this bill forward into law.

IN RECOGNITION OF DANIEL PALETKO

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the legacy of public service and commitment to our communities of the late Mayor of Dearborn Heights, Michigan, Daniel Paletko.

Dan Paletko served as mayor of Dearborn Heights from 2004 until his death in 2020. Paletko served one term as a Michigan State Representative and more than two decades as a Dearborn Heights City Councilman. He prioritized making Dearborn Heights a welcoming place for all its residents to call home and was especially proud of the city's rich cultural diversity and recreational resources. His pride in Dearborn Heights was evident in his dedication.

Beyond his public service, Mr. Paletko volunteered his time to many community-based organizations. He was particularly involved with his church community at St. Linus Church, where he served as an usher. He also proudly gave his time to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs and to the American Legion.

Please join me as we recognize Mayor Daniel Paletko's many contributions to the families of Dearborn Heights and the 13th Congressional District as we give honor to his memory.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES B. MILLER

HON. TOM RICE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of First Lieutenant James B. Miller of Marion, South Carolina.

First Lieutenant Miller honorably served his country in the Army during the Korean War. He was awarded the Purple Heart twice while serving with the 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division in Korea. He was seriously wounded by enemy fire in North Korea on March 6, 1953. First Lieutenant Miller returned to duty only a week later. On July 26, 1953, First Lieutenant Miller was tragically killed in action while fighting the enemy in North Korea.

Madam Speaker, I join his family and friends in recognizing the life of First Lieutenant James B. Miller of Marion, South Carolina. We honor him and thank him for his service and sacrifice for our nation.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF QUTHEL MCNATT

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Quthel McNatt of Tishomingo who passed away December 14 at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo.

Mr. McNatt was a beacon of kindess and generosity to all who had the opportunity to know him. He served as a Deacon at Tishomingo Baptist Church. In his free time, Mr. McNatt enjoyed fishing, hunting, and spending time with family and friends. He was a member of IBEW Local 474. From 1989 to 1993 Quthel McNatt served as the mayor of Tishomingo.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 67 years, Sara Haines McNatt; sons, Edward, Wesley, and Joshua; and grandchildren, gage, Brady, Belle, Karmen, and Maddyx.

Quthel McNatt was a man of faith and a servant to family, state, and country. He was a blessing to those who knew him and an outstanding Mississippian.

DEDICATED PATRIOTS IN WASHINGTON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, thousands of dedicated patriots will be in Washington tomorrow to Stop The Steal peacefully protesting the irregularities of the 2020 election. I will welcome the Stedmans of New Jersey, the Durhams of South Carolina, and the Carons of Florida. They are already winners with Republican gains in Congress with 19 additional Republican women, and all Republican House incumbents re-elected as 15 incumbent Democrats lost, and The Epoch Times, December 2nd by Pete Svab highlighted Republican gains in the state legislatures:

''Republicans expanded their control of state legislatures in the 2020 election, flipping both chambers in one state while gaining more than 160 seats overall.''

''Their lead over Democrats thus increased to more than 700 seats (about 67 percent) from over 400.''

''The 2020 gains bring the GOP to a total of more than 4,000 seats.''

''The balance of power has major consequences. States decide much of the policy that affects people's daily lives, in areas such as education, law enforcement, health care, housing, and infrastructure.''

I especially appreciate in South Carolina the leadership of President Donald Trump has produced the largest Republican majorities in 140 years at all levels of government.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

HONORING REV. JAMES C. BIRDSONG, JR.

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary Georgian and a great American, Reverend James C. Birdsong, Jr.

Rev. Birdsong is a multi-talented preacher, gospel musician, nationally published author, motivational speaker, and entrepreneur. Through his faith-based outreach, Rev. Birdsong has reached thousands of Georgians with his message of perseverance and trust in God's plan.

Rev. Birdsong was born into a family of talented artists in Richmond, California. From a young age, he knew that his mission in life was to share the word of God with others. Rev. Birdsong exhibited courage and resilience in overcoming a developmental disability to pursue his goals and further his education, culminating in a degree in Biblical Education from Beulah Heights University in Atlanta.

In recent years, Reverend Birdsong has kept busy, conducting numerous media interviews, accepting awards across the country, authoring a moving autobiography, and continuing to preach the gospel. He remains deeply involved in his community, founding the Birdsong Association of Broadcasting and Arts, to provide young voices with the platform and guidance to refine their talents and follow their dreams. He has further helped young Georgians to find their path in life through his continued youth advocacy efforts, leaving a positive impact on so many young people.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Reverend Birdsong on his impactful career, and extend my sincerest wishes for his continued health and success, as he inspires people across the United States.

May God continue to bless Reverend James C. Birdsong, Jr.