

HONORING WENDY BALDO

HON. ANDY BIGGS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of a longtime friend, Wendy Baldo, who will soon begin her well-deserved retirement.

Wendy first came to work in Arizona state government in 1988, during the administration of Governor Rose Mofford. In 1993, she began her long and distinguished career with the Arizona State Senate. In 2009, Wendy was hired as chief of staff for the legislative body, a role in which she has now served for more than 12 years.

I came to know Wendy while serving in the Arizona state legislature from 2002 to 2016. My election to the Arizona Senate in 2010 provided me the opportunity to work under Wendy's guidance, and she continued to serve as my chief of staff for the four years I served as Arizona Senate President. Wendy was always a trusted advisor. She staunchly protected the institution of the Senate and was the fierce, loyal ally every leader needs. It is a rare occurrence in the Arizona Senate for a chief of staff to serve multiple Senate presidents. Wendy's service to five presidents is a true testament to her character and caliber.

The knowledge and expertise Wendy has accumulated in her years in the Arizona Senate are an invaluable resource. Her retirement, while well-deserved, will undoubtedly be a loss for the Senate. I thank Wendy for her many years of service to the people of Arizona and wish her well in this next phase of her life.

REMEMBERING HARRY M.
ROSENFELD**HON. STEVE COHEN**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer the thanks of a grateful nation for the life and work of former Washington Post Metro editor Harry M. Rosenfeld who guided the newspaper in its Pulitzer Prize-winning Watergate coverage. Mr. Rosenfeld died last week at the age of 91. A survivor of Berlin's Kristallnacht in 1938, he and his family immigrated to New York City in March of 1939, just months before World War II began. After graduating from Syracuse University and a stint in the U.S. Army, Mr. Rosenfeld joined the New York Herald Tribune syndicate and rose to managing editor before joining The Post. Editor Ben Bradlee made him assistant managing editor for metropolitan news where he inherited a staff of hungry reporters covering local beats, among them Carl Bernstein. Mr. Rosenfeld later hired a very persistent Bob Woodward. The double-byline stories of Woodward and Bernstein, covering scandal and corruption in the Nixon administration, eventually led to Nixon's 1974 resignation. He ended his career as the editor of newspapers in Albany, New York. I offer my condolences to his wife Anne and his three daughters and his extended family. Mr. Rosenfeld's enduring sense of justice and demand for accountability helped change American history and inspired

a generation of journalists. His passion for the truth and for journalism was an inspiration and a model to be emulated. His was a life well led.

SUCCESS ACT

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, during the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen how crucial internet access has been for learning and completing assignments. The homework gap, experienced by as many as 17 million students in the U.S. who do not have internet access at home, is an inequity that predates the coronavirus pandemic.

When I first began talking about this issue, I was shocked and saddened to recognize there were so many misconceptions about who was part of the homework gap. So many of my colleagues believed the homework gap is something that predominantly affects students in rural America. But in fact, one in five school-age children in NYC's public school system—the largest public school system in the country—do not have internet access at home.

The nature of homework assignments has fundamentally changed. Before, all you needed was a pencil and paper. But that is no longer the norm. Internet access is essential to completing homework assignments. It broke my heart to hear stories of families parked outside McDonalds or Starbucks trying to catch a free Wi-Fi signal.

Closing the homework gap extends beyond just helping our students finish their homework. Internet connectivity is essential to success in the 21st century; much like electricity was important in the 1930s, internet will be the same, if not more.

That is why Congress passed the Emergency Educational Connections Act as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, a bill that I proudly championed with Senator MARKY. This provision created the Emergency Connectivity Fund, and provided a one-time \$7.17 billion appropriation to connect students and library patrons learning at home.

As our Nation works to move past the pandemic, we must finally close the full homework gap that predates the ongoing emergency. That is why I am proud to introduce today the Securing Universal Communications Connectivity to Ensure Students Succeed or the SUCCESS Act. This bill would provide \$8 billion a year over five years (for a total of \$40 billion) to extend the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund, without an emergency time frame, so that schools and libraries can continue supporting distance learning after the coronavirus pandemic is over. This extended program will then ensure that students connected by the emergency connectivity fund do not lose their internet access and devices once the original funds run dry.

Madam Speaker, as the mother of two young children, I know firsthand how crucial this issue is. Each and every student must have the tools they need to succeed in school, and the SUCCESS Act is an essential component to permanently closing the homework gap. I urge all of my colleagues in both chambers to help close this digital divide for good.

SERIOUS ISSUES FACING OUR
COUNTRY

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I'm here to point out just how interconnected the climate emergency is to America's housing crisis and how it impacts communities of color.

We are living in a climate emergency. Wildfires are raging, sea levels are rising, and severe weather events are getting stronger. Meanwhile homes are being destroyed, and not nearly enough is being done to address environmental racism and the ways in which communities of color across this country suffer disproportionately from a lack of action. We cannot stand by as corporations, big oil, and industry titans pollute the air we breathe and contaminate the water we drink without consequence.

The truth is that these negative environmental factors compound social and economic conditions, and lead to higher levels of chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension in communities of color and low-income communities. It should surprise no one that on average, people of color comprise 56 percent of the population living in neighborhoods with facilities that release toxic substances into the air and water supply.

This is a fair housing issue and a direct result of systemic racism and historically racist policies, including redlining and exclusionary zoning, that segregate low-income people and people of color into areas that have suffered from decades of disinvestment. These segregated areas are often located closer to industrial districts and are therefore more likely to be deprived of green spaces, healthy homes, and clean drinking water. None of this is news. But, because of worsening residential segregation, the increasingly harmful effects of climate change and extreme weather events are exacerbating these conditions in low-income communities and communities of color.

Today, formerly redlined communities suffer from hotter temperatures, and their homes are 25 percent more likely to experience damage due to flooding compared to communities that were not redlined. In some cases, whether due to repeated flooding or because they are located at higher elevations, low-income communities of color, such as in Puerto Rico and Florida, are facing displacement, known as climate gentrification.

The real-life examples are far too plenty. Take for example, St. James Parish, Louisiana—a community that is often referred to as "Cancer Alley." I traveled there in 2001 to bring international attention to corporate pollution and the human costs of that pollution on communities of color. St. James Parish has a long history of inequality. The parish is located along the lower Mississippi River where enslaved Africans were forced to labor. Today, it serves as an industrial hub, with nearly 150 oil refineries, plastics plants, and chemical facilities. Not only have these facilities polluted the surrounding water and air, but they have also subjected the mostly African American residents of St. James Parish to cancer, respiratory diseases, and other health problems.

In 2005, we saw how Hurricane Katrina impacted people of color in New Orleans. Lives

were taken, whole communities were absolutely ravaged, and homes were destroyed. Even after seeing that level of destruction, not enough action has been taken to make sure that homes are resilient and safe from extreme weather events, especially those located in the hardest hit communities.

And just last year, in the middle of the pandemic, Georgia and Tennessee experienced deadly tornados that damaged and demolished more than 2,000 homes. In the wake of California's 2018 wildfires—the deadliest in the state's history—82 percent of homes that were built to pre-2008 standards were damaged. The need to ensure our homes and communities are sited and built more equitably and resiliently is more critical than ever before.

And so, I want to make it clear that America's housing infrastructure is vulnerable to the growing costs of climate change and weather disasters, which will only accelerate the need for maintenance and repair, or it will make our housing infrastructure uninhabitable. Between 2016 and 2020, these disasters have cost nearly \$616 billion in damages and have displaced tens of thousands of people from their homes. We cannot keep asking people to live like this. We must act now.

As Chairwoman of the House Committee on Financial Services, I recently introduced my historic Housing Infrastructure Act of 2021, which provides over \$600 billion to increase our nation's green, inclusive, affordable housing infrastructure. I'm fighting for the type of investments that will bring our housing stock into the 21st century and beyond, including working to address environmental racism and the climate emergency, strengthening our nation's commitment to fair housing, and recognizing that housing infrastructure.

HONORING DIANE DILLON

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Diane Dillon as the recipient of the Napa County Farm Bureau's 2021 Friend of Agriculture for her ongoing work in serving Napa Valley's agricultural community.

As a fifth-generation Napa County resident, Diane has been an active community member for as long as she can remember. A UC Santa Barbara alumna, she graduated with a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology with Honors then continued her education at UCLA where she received her master's in library and information science. Diane went on to receive her J.D. from UC Davis in 1981 where she was a member of numerous school organizations. Since 2003, Diane has been serving on the Napa County Board of Supervisors as District 3 representative. As a Supervisor, Diane has made it a mission to better understand the intricacies of the state budget and finance system. To that end, she was asked to serve on the statewide Cities Counties Schools (CCS) Partnership 2009 Joint Task Force on Fiscal Reform. In January 2010, Diane held the first ever county-wide conference involving the county, municipalities, and school representatives.

Throughout her career, Diane has tirelessly worked with the agricultural community to un-

derstand and address the complex issues they face. As a co-organizer and member of "Get a Grip on Growth," she helped protect a 900+ acre piece of land from becoming developed into a commercial building area. Furthermore, Diane was co-chair on the "No on W & X Committee" where she received the Outstanding Service Award from United Napa Valley Associates for her resolute work. Diane is regarded as a passionate and dedicated member of the community and is recognized for her hard work to protect the scenic resources and beautiful lands of Napa County's agricultural industry. She is an excellent example of what it means to be a hard-working elected representative and a role model to many in leadership and the agricultural sector.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that Diane Dillon's achievements will leave a tremendous impact in our community for generations to come. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "RENNY" CUSHING

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Mr. RASKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Robert "Renny" Cushing, who has led a remarkable life dedicated to social activism and public service. His selfless determination to secure equitable social change for the communities he has served is a true testament to our country's civic spirit.

His journey began at the young age of 15 while advocating alongside civil rights activist Allard Lowenstein to end the Vietnam War and to lower the voting age nationwide. A year later, he left Hampton, New Hampshire with only \$40 in his pocket and an itch to see the world. Renny soon traveled thousands of miles and worked numerous blue-collar jobs. He picked oranges in Florida, plucked grapes in the San Joaquin Valley of California, collected waste in Atlanta and harvested tobacco in Mexico. After a few years of travelling, he decided to bring all the knowledge he acquired about people and life back home.

When he returned to Hampton, Renny co-founded the Clamshell Alliance, a group that would protest the construction of a nuclear station that individuals and families throughout his community voted against. He also later co-founded the Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, an international non-government organization of family members of murder victims fearlessly dedicated to opposing the death penalty. Renny, whose father was tragically murdered, spent decades advocating for the abolishment of New Hampshire's death penalty law, which the state did repeal in 2019.

He officially began his career as a legislator in 1986, after winning his first election as a Representative of the New Hampshire State House. Following multiple non-consecutive terms, Renny was nominated as the Democratic Leader of the New Hampshire State House of Representatives in 2020. While serving as the Democratic Leader, Renny received a heartbreaking stage four prostate cancer diagnosis after he was hospitalized with acute kidney failure.

Renny did not allow this devastating news to deter his commitment to serving others. Now the Democratic Minority Leader, Renny continues to serve in the New Hampshire State House where he has fought to ensure remote access to House hearings for disabled legislators, expand availability of medical marijuana for cancer patients and ensure the removal of harmful PFAS chemicals in nearby wells.

Renny has devoted his life to the betterment of our nation and our communities and the uplifting of all our people. His unwavering commitment and tenacious attitude even in the toughest of times exemplify what it means to be a patriotic American.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the important accomplishments of Robert "Renny" Cushing, and I hope this Chamber will join me in celebrating his remarkable life and career.

HONORING JAMES W. FLINT

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and a champion of the LGBTQ community, James W. Flint, on his 80th birthday.

At just 17, Jim enlisted in the Navy. He quickly became an accomplished service member before returning home to Illinois. Since the early 1960s, Jim has been the lifeblood of Chicago's LGBTQ+ community, dedicating his time, resources, and talents to expanding and creating the LGBTQ nightlife scene. For over 60 years, Jim has been a trailblazer and inspiration to many across the state of Illinois and beyond, and has been a committed activist and business leader.

He started his career as a bartender and quickly became the entrepreneur we know and love by opening his first locale, the Baton Show Lounge, in downtown Chicago. It was a first of its kind drag bar, featuring drag queen entertainers before these kinds of shows became as popular as they are today. In the decades since, Jim has owned many fabulous establishments, including Annex 2, Annex 3, Redoubt, Redoubt Atlanta, and River North Travel, in addition to the Baton Show Lounge, which is still open today and was recently relocated to my very own 9th Congressional district.

In addition to his extraordinary bars, in 1980, Jim founded the Miss Gay Continental Pageant, a national level drag showcase. He was motivated to start the pageant when he learned that many other pageants were discriminating against drag performers we would today identify as transgender. At that time, many of the pageants created rules and barriers that excluded entertainers that were living as women or who had any kind of plastic surgery. Today, now known as the Miss Continental Pageant, it has expanded to a pageant system that celebrates male and female entertainers from all across the country and around the world, and occurs in Chicago annually.

He was also a co-founder of the Windy City Athletic Association, which gave LGBTQ Chicagoans the opportunity to compete in amateur athletics with their counterparts from all across the nation.