

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FINAL FAREWELL

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2022

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, as I reflect on more than four decades of service in the Federal Government—working for our former Southwest Michigan Congressman David Stockman, then President Ronald Reagan, and finally in the U.S. House of Representatives—I am so grateful for the countless folks who have helped along the way including my peers, staff, and wonderful family who have helped me do my best day after day.

“One cannot count on luck. It comes and goes. But one can count on hard work. ALSO, staying out of your OWN way . . . and, for most folks, that’s the hardest part.”—Amey Upton.

I was asked last week what I want to be remembered for, and without a second thought I pointed to a small, simple brass frame with a motto that I picked up from my grandfather’s desk when he passed away at 96 years of age. It read, “When in doubt, do the right thing!” I have kept it at the center of my desk and work at the Capitol all these years.

In this journey, I have been blessed by the sacrifice of many. First and foremost, my wife Amey, who as my best friend for some 40 years has watched me depart practically every week for a trip to Washington, D.C., making 99.9 percent of the nearly 22,000 votes cast. I often was at one of our district offices or community events most days of the week. I still vividly recall the Bangor town meeting on a Halloween Saturday morning in 1987 when the water came down that my wife’s water had broken, and I had better get to the hospital pretty quickly. Then there was my son reminding me not to talk to strangers as a 6-year-old in the Watervliet 4th of July parade or having to miss my daughter’s birthday to participate in a debate during one of my 25 contested elections. Obviously, the sacrifice of family time they all made was something they endured, especially last-minute schedule changes to long-planned family activities.

My staff—such a blessing. Janet Zielke and Joan Hillebrands were with me all 36 years and a number of others more than 20 years. Joan actually started as a legislative correspondent and worked her way to Chief of Staff where she has been steadily guiding our ship for the last 25 years. Corey Hanson, Mitzi Fitzpatrick, and Nivia Marquis are the best in the business at solving IRS, small business, immigration, and veterans’ issues among others. My communications folks handling press on local and national interests were always terrific, Caroline Banaszak and Jamal Ware helped finish up strong. Dale Shugars and Mike Ryan ran my two district offices, and I have known them both for many decades as leaders in their respective communities of Portage and St. Joseph. And before them, Al Pscholka, John Proos, Jeff Breneman, Clay

McCausland, and Jack Baker held those same titles. Kaitlyn Peterson was my front desk traffic cop directing many constituent inquiries. All in all, we handled more than 1 million constituent inquiries. All my staff carried the same passion to do the right thing from the start. Whether it be D.C. staff or here at home, they effectively and proudly served so many thousands of people in our communities.

Every Congressional office is different, but I established ours with my 2 Michigan offices handling my constituent services, and my D.C. staff preparing me on legislative issues. Almost everyone started as an intern, answering the phone, and hearing from constituents by answering the mail (remember, the internet didn’t become widely available until the late 90s). From there, they moved up and were recognized for the experience they gained and dedication they demonstrated. My former scheduler and Officer Manager Bits Thomas started as an intern and then was my “doorkeeper” for a decade before she moved back to Michigan with her family. Her stellar successor, Suzanne Scruggs, once worked for a Cabinet member and is married to one of my first volunteers from 1986, who later became my Legislative Director. He later went to law school at night and now helps run one of the most prestigious firms in Washington.

Alec Zender was with us several years helping our farmers and small businesses, then went to fellow Michigander Rep. JACK BERGMAN.

Last but not least, the point man and architect who shepherded 21st Century Cures, Mark Ratner. As resident comedian and my MSU sports rival, he served as my legislative right-hand man for nearly 20 years.

And the list goes on. I am so proud of our team. I’ve been involved with a long list of issues, so long that there has been little time to stop and “smell the roses.”

It was the late State Senator Harry Gast who convinced me to serve on the House Transportation Committee when I was first elected so I could help complete US-31 connecting three interstates in Berrien County. There were a lot of bumps, potholes, and butterflies along the way, but I am happy to say the project is now complete. Also, my amendment in that first 5-year highway bill increased Michigan’s share of each federal dollar from 72 cents to 90 cents, providing billions that would have otherwise gone to other states. Later helping to widen and improve I-94 with US-131 moving east towards I-69.

Moving from Transportation to the powerful Energy & Commerce Committee in 1991 I had a terrific mentor in Chairman John Dingell. I served as Chair of the Oversight, Telecommunications, & Energy Subcommittees which eventually led to me becoming Chair of the full committee from 2010 to 2016. Speaker Newt Gingrich changed the seniority rules making the chairs compete for the chairmanships with a 6-year term limit. Without that change, I would still be sitting as a senior member of the committee but still not having had a chance to lead it.

Yes, bipartisanship was always a guiding principle. I learned that at the Reagan White House where a GOP President worked with a Democrat-controlled Congress and got things done. Quite frankly, quite a few Americans probably voted with both hands to fill in ballot circles or punch the chad for him in 1980 yet we saw him win in a landslide 4 years later except for Mondale’s Minnesota. I always kept one of Reagan’s mottos in mind, “It doesn’t matter who gets the credit, as long as the job gets done.”

The Great Lakes has always been a top priority for me. I’ve worked to ban micro-beads, ensure water quality funds, establish an oil spill response team, pipeline safety and delivered on a plan with Governor Rick Snyder to replace Line 5 under the Mackinac Bridge at a \$500 million cost. I also spent time ensuring dredging our harbors, battling Asian carp, and authorizing a new lock for the Soo. If the 60-year-old lock went down, it would literally double the Nation’s unemployment as iron ore could not make it to the steel mills for autos, appliances, and our manufacturing industries.

As a vice-chair of the bipartisan Problem Solver’s Caucus (PSC), we met virtually every week and were instrumental in passing the CHIPS and Infrastructure bills to help America remain competitive. We also played a role in the Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) that enabled so many of our small businesses to keep their employees paid during the COVID shutdown and provide a lifeline to maintain their presence.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I drove through the Pentagon parking lot about an hour before the plane hit the building. General Van Antwerp, whom I had grown up with on my street in St. Joseph, was spared because he was at a meeting out of the building, but a number of his staff were killed. As the Telecommunications Subcommittee Chair, I led a number of colleagues to New York City a few days later, where the rescue mission was still taking place at Ground Zero. We later passed legislation that was the top priority noted by the 9/11 Commission’s report to allocate broadcast spectrum allowing law enforcement to have their own frequency to communicate. We did such by forcing the broadcasters to convert their analogue broadcast signal to digital and selling that newly created spectrum to the highest bidders in the telecommunications industry. This allowed them to produce devices with text and video, which created the 5G network, hundreds of thousands of jobs, and generated revenue to reduce the deficit.

Supporting our troops and our brave veterans was always the easiest vote I cast. Whether it be Agent Orange or Burn Pits benefits or visiting our troops in harm’s way in Iraq or Afghanistan, visiting our military hospitals here and overseas, count me as a grateful American. Allowing our vets to receive medical care in their home community if they prefer versus traveling across the state to a VA facility was also a choice I supported.

I have had the opportunity to have many classified briefings on China, Ukraine, Russia,

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

and protecting American interests. We are a free nation because of our brave. It always has been a favorite moment for me to nominate qualified young men and women to attend our military academies. General Emery Upton was in the West Point class with George Custer and later served as Commandant. His statue is on Little Round Top in Gettysburg. And my 98-year-old dad served in World War II, including the Battle of the Bulge.

Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL called the enactment of 21st Century Cures the most important legislative achievement in that Congress when President Obama signed it into law in December 2016. I led a 3-year effort as chair of the Energy & Commerce Committee to pass this legislation, which expedites the FDA approvals of drugs and devices and was coupled with \$45 billion in additional health research funding. We literally held dozens of round table discussions, hearings, meetings with disease groups, the FDA, National Institutes of Health (NIH), pharmaceutical companies, and research institutions like the University of Michigan, MD Anderson, Mayo Clinic, Harvard, and the Milken Institute. Fast forward 4 years to COVID. Pfizer's CEO told his folks that they would spend "whatever it takes" to find a vaccine and thankfully were successful. Cures allowed them to produce the vaccine prior to the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) and be able to deliver it across the country the very next day after receiving the EUA in December of 2020. This was probably 6–8 months earlier than would have happened without our legislation, saving hundreds of thousands American lives. Then-Vice President Joe Biden played a pivotal hands-on role, and we included the \$1 billion Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot initiative as part of this bill. One of our great sources was Nobel Prize winner immunologist Jim Allison whose breakthroughs have been the answer to thousands.

The terrible events of January 6 continue to dominate the news nearly two years later, including this week's release of the final committee report. That morning, I walked through the House floor back to my Rayburn office where I watched many of the protesters parading under my balcony to the White House grounds. I then watched the President's speech to the crowd on TV before they came back to the Capitol and certainly attempted to violently disrupt the counting of the electoral votes cast by each state. I saw the gallows on the Capitol lawn intended for Mike Pence, and thanked some of the SWAT team members laying exhausted in the Rotunda. Chilling. Michigan was one of the 4 states that was going to be challenged despite the 154,000-vote difference. To date, there is still no credible evidence that our vote was fraudulent. I voted absentee in that election, as I did this last November 8, and I am confident that our system works. Under the law established in the 1800s, it only takes 1 Member from the House and Senate to force the full House and Senate to reconsider. This week the House and Senate adopted a legislative change requiring a minimum of 20 percent of each body to challenge a states' certified count. In my estimation we avoided a massacre of my colleagues on the House floor by only 10–15 minutes. Trump's later statement that he did everything "totally appropriate" was a key factor for my impeachment vote a week later and my support for a bipartisan January 6 con-

gressional commission. In my view, the commission's unanimous support for their report issued this week prevented the facts from being swept under the rug and helped ensure preservation of the peaceful transfer of presidential power.

More than a 1,000 folks provided testimony to get the truth that otherwise never would have been told. Where were these same souls who knew the intimate story when we debated impeachment? Crickets.

One regret I will share was the failure of the Super Committee a dozen years ago to deal with the deficit. It had 6 members of the House and Senate: 6 Republicans and 6 Democrats. The rule was that we had to get 7 votes, and we could never get more than 6 as it turned out. We spent a couple months negotiating different alternatives but could never quite get there. I was one of the "aye" votes with fellow Michigan colleague and Chair of the House Ways & Means Committee Dave Camp, but we were 1 vote short. The looming budget deficit remains a threat that most certainly future leaders must address.

My last 2 days in Congress were action packed. On Wednesday evening, I attended a joint session of Congress in which we heard from the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Earlier this year, I had a chance to listen as Zelenskyy addressed the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus by Zoom. It was encouraging to now see him in person as he makes the compelling case for Ukraine directly to the American people and their representatives. I have had the opportunity during my career to watch presidential national addresses and world leaders speak to the Congress such as Nelson Mandela, Queen Elizabeth, the Pope, and others from around the globe. I was especially proud to listen to President Zelenskyy on one of my very last days serving in the U.S. Congress.

The House and Senate cleared a \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill to keep the government open and funded through the 2023 fiscal year. I voted for the package, funding a number of priorities, including a 10-percent increase in defense spending to \$858 billion. The bill also includes \$1.5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency, that like its defense counterpart, will fund cutting-edge research that has the potential to save millions of lives. This is the next step for 21st Century Cures. The bill also includes \$45 billion to help Ukraine defend its freedom and citizens against Russia's brutal invasion, including barbaric attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

I supported Congress acting this year because it avoids the risk of a government shutdown to start the New Year, given the narrow majorities in the House and Senate. A shutdown would threaten America's security and cause disruption to vital domestic programs, including those that help improve health outcomes in our nation. It clears the deck for the next Congress to start fresh on FY '24 rather than mop up unfinished business 4 months into FY '23.

On a closing note, I leave you with the words of a brave young woman:

"How wonderful is it that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."—Anne Frank

RECOGNIZING THE 2022 LORDS AND LADIES OF FAIRFAX

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2022

Mr. CONNOLLY. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a dedicated group of men and women in Northern Virginia, the Lords and Ladies of Fairfax.

Every year, each member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors selects two people from his or her district who have demonstrated outstanding volunteer service, heroism, or other exceptional commitments and contributions to our community. Since the program's inception in 1984, approximately 720 individuals have earned the honor of being named a Lord or Lady Fairfax by his or her representative on the Board of Supervisors.

This year, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors will recognize those individuals who have made tremendous impacts through their support of our public schools, parks, youth sports leagues, arts community, public safety, and human service programs. It is nearly impossible to fully describe the diversity of accomplishments of the honorees. Their efforts contribute greatly to the quality of life for the residents of Fairfax County and are worthy of our praise and sincere appreciation.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD the names of the 2022 Lords and Ladies Fairfax:

At-Large: Lady Nelfred Tilly Blanding and Lord Robert Pizzano, Jr.

Braddock District: Lady Diane Hoffman and Lord Jim Hickey

Dranesville District: Lady Lisa Merkel and Lord Steven Bloom

Hunter Mill District: Lady Raba Alwan Letteri and Lord Kurt Rose

Franconia District: Lady Juana Cruz and Lord Edward D. Joseph

Mason District: Lady Honorable Penney Azcarate and Lord Eduardo "Eddy" Azcarate

Mount Vernon District: Lady Maria Severa Pangelinan and Lord Jeff Gauger

Providence District: Lady Robbie Snow and Lord Rafael L. Marin

Springfield District: Lady Caroline Sieber and Lord Sam Gray

Sully District: Lady Malini Puli and Lord Sekhar Puli

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending and expressing our gratitude to these men and women who volunteer their time and energy on behalf of our community. Their efforts, which are deserving of our highest praise, provide immeasurable benefits to their fellow residents and serve as a reminder of why Fairfax County remains such a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

RECOGNIZING NICOLE DAMASCO FOR HER DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. JERRY MCNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 23, 2022

Mr. MCNERNEY. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing my Chief of Staff, Nicole Damasco, for her outstanding commitment and dedication to serving California's 9th Congressional District, the former