

North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROUZER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Melissa Murphy, my chief of staff, who recently moved on to a great opportunity working for Duke Energy of South Carolina.

After a decade and a half of service here in our Nation's capital, Melissa decided it was time to leave her work here in the U.S. House and head back home. Melissa started her career on Capitol Hill working for her home State of South Carolina in Congressman JOE WILSON's office. There, she worked her way up to deputy chief of staff before joining my team when I was elected to Congress in 2014. As my first hire and chief of staff, she helped me assemble an outstanding team, and she helped me build a culture for an office that has accomplished much.

Melissa has always been a trusted advisor and a great friend to many. Throughout her career on Capitol Hill, she served as a mentor and friend to many staffers far beyond my office. She is always there for her colleagues or anyone else searching for advice or assistance.

As every Member of Congress knows, nothing would get done in this place without the dedicated service of our staff who are always working behind the scenes. Melissa's advice, experience, and hard work have all played a large role in helping me to represent the 7th Congressional District in North Carolina to the very best of my ability.

I congratulate and thank Melissa for her many years of congressional service and for leading our team during my first three-and-a-half terms. May God always bless her path.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO GARRET AUGUSTUS MORGAN, BESSIE COLEMAN, ARCOLA PHILPOTT, AND BENJAMIN BANNEKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Madam Speaker, in the past several months, Democrats have advanced the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, along with, most recently, the COMPETES Act, which will increase American innovation, start making more critical products in America, and turbocharge American scientific and technological leadership.

With those bills in mind, I thought it was particularly important during Black History Month to pay special tribute to four bold, brilliant, and Black minds who have contributed in various ways through their inventions to innovation and to infrastructure in America.

First, let's meet the "Father of Transportation Technology," better known as Garret Augustus Morgan. Born in Paris, Kentucky, and later moved to Ohio, Morgan was a Black American inventor. Witnessing a fatal

car crash was essentially the catalyst in Morgan's invention of the three-position traffic signal, which is the predecessor to the modern-day traffic light. Though the stop-and-go signals had already existed, Morgan advanced the invention to include a third position that stopped traffic in both directions and allowed pedestrians to safely cross the road. Talented as he was, Morgan's other inventions included a version of the gas mask, grooming products, sewing machines, and much more.

Madam Speaker, a second inspiration was a Black American, better known as "Brave Bessie," and to others as "Queen Bess." The sky was anything but the limit to this Texas native, Bessie Coleman. Fueled by rejections and constant noes, Coleman's determination and diligence allowed her to soar as she was accepted into the Caudron Brothers' School of Aviation in France, and earned her international pilot's license on June 15, 1921.

Becoming the first African-American woman pilot in 1922, Coleman was best known for performing tricks in the air in both the United States and Europe. She passionately encouraged other women to learn to fly, both figuratively and literally, by touring the country, giving lectures, teaching flight lessons, and performing flight exhibitions.

A real go-getter was Arcola Philpott, who earned her place in transportation history in 1944 when the Los Angeles Railway hired Philpott to be the first Black woman streetcar operator. Philpott opened the door for both women and African Americans to operate streetcars in Los Angeles. Just weeks after hiring her, Los Angeles Railway hired its first Black motorman. Philpott's time as the first Black and streetcar operator represents just a small portion of the impact she had.

Originally from Chicago, she graduated from Loyola University with a degree in social science and performed welfare work prior to moving to Los Angeles. When she returned to Chicago, she worked as a nurse and a researcher at the University of Chicago's history department.

And finally, Benjamin Banneker, the Black architect who helped design the capital city. Banneker was hired by the first President, George Washington, and came highly recommended by Thomas Jefferson. He designed the layout of Washington, D.C.'s, streets, parks, major buildings in two days. Known for many well-deserved accomplishments and contributions through his lifetime, he later became a reputable architect, mathematician, engineer, and even an astronomer.

Black people should be proud of their heritage, and all Americans should celebrate the achievements of Black Americans. Infrastructure within the United States would look incredibly different without the inventions, achievements, and innovations of these Black minds. It is important to document and share stories of lesser-known

historical figures who also contributed their greatest efforts. Happy Black History Month.

U.S. PARK POLICE MODERNIZATION ACT

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

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor our brave law enforcement officers at the United States Park Police. From every major protest to every parade that occurs on the National Mall, our Park Police officers answer the call to keep our constituents safe when they are visiting here in the Nation's capital.

However, due to an increase in the number of demonstrations and the fact that they are extremely understaffed, one of our Nation's oldest uniformed Federal law enforcement agencies is now stretched extremely thin.

As of March 1, 2021, there were fewer than 500 Park Police officers. That is significantly lower than the minimum requirement they have of 639 officers. This is alarming, and obviously, among other concerns, this leaves the Nation's most historic landmarks extremely vulnerable. And that is why today, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3924, the U.S. Park Police Modernization Act.

And what is the problem? Why are they facing the issues that they are facing? Well, the bottom line, for whatever reason, is because the pay and benefits are much lower for the Park Police than for other Federal law enforcement agencies. And the big question is why is that the case? That is an outstanding question. Why?

There is no real good reason. And it is for that reason that we, here in Congress, need to immediately improve the Park Police's pay and benefits and to put that agency on equal footing with other similar departments. To do so would incentivize officers to both join the Park Police, but even more importantly, to stay. Both of those issues are huge concerns right now. That is how we will ensure that Washington, D.C., the place where each of us work, the place where our staff works, and obviously, where many of our constituents come to visit, remain safe for years to come.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3924. Let's put our U.S. Park Police on equal footing with other law enforcement agencies in this area so that they can do the job that we all depend upon them to do.

GUN VIOLENCE IS RUNNING RAMPANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I rise today because my district is hurting. Washington Heights-Inwood is

hurting because they saw how Officer Jason Rivera was taken away from us. A 22-year old son of Inwood was taken away from us by gun violence when he responded to a family dispute.

But Harlem also is hurting because both Officers Rivera and Mora patrolled the 32nd precinct in Harlem, and they were both brutally shot and killed in the village of Harlem.

Madam Speaker, East Harlem is hurting because we saw how a young woman, Kristal Bayron-Nieves, who worked in a Burger King, was shot and killed. Even though she gave the money from the register to the person that held up the Burger King at gunpoint, she was still brutally shot and killed—19 years old.

Madam Speaker, finally, the Bronx part of my district is also hurting because an 11-month-old child, just before she turned 1, sat in the car with her mother and was shot in the face. All of this happened within two weeks of each other.

So my district is hurting as we bury these two young police officers, 22 and 27 years old, of Dominican heritage, the first in their family to serve the Police Department. So gun violence is running rampant. And we see how many talk about law and order, but when it comes to gun violence, they are still in the pocket of the NRA; and they won't dare challenge the NRA.

So I rise because my district is hurting. And we are supportive of Mayor Adams' plan of precision policing, which has identified 700 people that have been involved in 1,700 acts of violence involving an illegal weapon. We understand that much more has to be invested in ATF; so we cut off the iron pipeline that brings weapons to the corner of my district from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. But we also have to invest 50 million in summer youth jobs. We have to invest more money to have the violence interrupters be part of the resolution of this violence ripping our communities across the country.

We must all work together to resolve this epidemic of gun violence. We must pass the package of gun laws that we have here on this floor, including ghost guns, which continue to play an increased role in the death of people across the country, circumventing background checks and other restrictions that must be put in place to keep guns away from people's hands.

Madam Speaker, I urge my House colleagues to join me today for a minute of silence in the memory of Officer Rivera and Officer Mora. And in support of their two families, we join them, and we will always be by their side.

Madam Speaker, I ask for a minute of silence.

ONE BILLION GUN RECORDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, the Biden administration is engaged in an assault on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens.

It was recently discovered that the Biden administration has been maintaining nearly 1 billion records on gun sales. My colleagues and I sent a letter to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives demanding answers about this registry. The ATF must be held accountable.

Federal law prohibits the Biden administration from maintaining a database of 1 billion gun records.

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What makes this more outrageous, this unconstitutional behavior of the Biden administration, is that, at the same time, they are continuing to empower Mexican cartels, criminal cartels who are transporting weapons across the border while threatening the rights of law-abiding Americans.

Lawful gun owners are rightfully concerned, and it is up to Congress to investigate further. President Biden and the Democrats want to defund the police, take away your Second Amendment right to self-defense, and then watch as crime skyrockets across the country, including in cities like Chicago.

I will continue to stand up for our Second Amendment. As long as I am here in Congress, every day I will fight for our constitutional rights, including our Second Amendment.

RECOGNIZING DR. HAROLD WILKINSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a local hero from the borough of Swarthmore, Dr. Harold Wilkinson.

Last month, at the age of 95, Dr. Wilkinson passed away peacefully in his sleep after a long life of exploration, inquiry, and service.

Hal enlisted in the Army Air Corps at the age of 18 and served stateside through the end of World War II. After meeting his wife, Rosie, in medical school, the pair settled in Swarthmore, where he opened a family medical practice and she worked as a pediatrician for children with developmental disabilities.

For 42 years, Hal maintained his practice, serving generations of Swarthmore residents. He was known for making house calls long after it went out of fashion, continuing his service into his seventies.

After his wife, Rosie, passed away, Hal was lucky enough to marry another local legend, Sandy Sparrow, a beloved former elementary school principal with whom he continued to travel the world.

Dr. Wilkinson was a pillar of our community, an iconic figure who could

be seen strolling with his friends or his rescue dog, Dugan, until late last year. A beloved friend to many, Hal was always interested in hearing the latest updates from friends and neighbors and exploring the world around him.

As the borough of Swarthmore mourns his passing, our hearts are with Hal's family. We were all so lucky to have known him.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF OCTAVIUS V. CATTO

Ms. SCANLON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a Philadelphia hero, Octavius V. Catto.

If you come to Philadelphia, you will see a statue of Octavius Catto on the south side of City Hall. It is the city's first public statue honoring an individual African American.

Throughout his life, Catto was an outspoken activist for the abolition of slavery and for equal rights for Black Americans. During the Civil War, he joined Frederick Douglass and other Black leaders to recruit African Americans to join the fight for emancipation. After the war, Catto continued his advocacy and successfully fought to desegregate Philadelphia's streetcars.

Catto was a man of many accomplishments. He graduated from the Institute for Colored Youth, which is now Pennsylvania-05's own Cheyney University, the first HBCU in the country. He also ran the undefeated Pythian Baseball Club of Philadelphia, a Negro League baseball team that played the first Black versus White game.

However, the most enduring part of Catto's legacy is his efforts to secure the right to vote for Black Americans. He was a champion for suffrage and fought to ensure that no one would be denied access to the ballot box.

Ultimately, his life's work brought about Catto's untimely death. On October 10, 1871, the first election day that Black men were allowed to vote in Philadelphia, 32-year-old Catto was shot and killed by a White mob trying to stop the Black vote.

Octavius Catto's life and sacrifice are an important reminder of the importance of continuing his work and honoring his legacy today to ensure that all Americans have the freedom to vote free from mob rule, gerrymandering, and other efforts to silence their voices.

FOLLOWING THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE HOUSE

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I have an article here about the Justice Department. It says it continues to go easy on the 2020 rioters.

These are people that destroyed government buildings, destroyed places of business, yet this administration continues to not just prosecute but persecute people who just came into the Capitol wrongly that should be punished. But to have people let loose immediately after burning people, being