

Mr. Speaker, with added federal support, more people living with Spina Bifida could receive assistance they need along their life's journey. I invite my colleagues to join me in this mission and join me in the Spina Bifida Caucus to broaden our efforts and advance the goal of a better future for people living with Spina Bifida.

RECOGNIZING FORMER COCONUT CREEK CITY OFFICIAL MIKKIE BELVEDERE

HON. JARED MOSKOWITZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize former Coconut Creek City Official Mikkie Belvedere for her many years of public service.

Born in Tel Aviv to German parents who fled Nazi persecution, Mikkie emigrated to the United States as a teenager. Elected to the Coconut Creek City Commission at 72, she has a long history of serving her community in Coconut Creek. Mikkie served three four-year terms, during which her fellow commissioners elected her Vice-Mayor and then Mayor of Coconut Creek.

Her public service extends far beyond city government, becoming active in various local groups, from helping establish and grow the Coconut Creek Multicultural Circle to serving as President of the Wynmoor Democratic Club. She is also an active member of her synagogue congregation. In her retirement, Mikkie remains intent on staying positive and helping her community, encouraging everyone she meets to "Keep Smiling."

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in recognizing former Coconut Creek City Official Mikkie Belvedere for her outstanding service to the people of Coconut Creek in Florida's 23rd Congressional District.

SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. KEVIN HERN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. HERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Day, as well as October as National Spina Bifida Month.

Spina Bifida impacts families across these United States, my own included. My sister and niece have lived with Spina Bifida since childhood.

Spina Bifida is a birth defect which results from a hole in the spiral cord that fails to close properly, which allows nerves and fluid to form a sac outside the body. This defect means that a child must undergo dozens of surgeries before adulthood, and even then, they face a multitude of mental and physical health issues. Each condition is unique, and no two children will be affected the same way.

In a testament to the innovation and research of our American scientific ingenuity, we now have the first generation of adults who are living with Spina Bifida. However, there is still much work to do.

It is our obligation to ensure proper funding for Spina Bifida care and research so that treatment and quality of life can improve for all Americans with this condition.

COMMEMORATING OCTOBER AS NATIONAL SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate October as National Spina Bifida Awareness Month, to recognize the approximately 166,000 Americans living with this condition, and to draw attention to the critical challenges we must address to ensure that each and every one of these individuals can achieve their full human potential and have the quality of life they deserve.

According to the Spina Bifida Association of America, Spina Bifida is the most common permanently disabling birth defect compatible with life. Literally translated as "split spine," Spina Bifida occurs when a baby's neural tube fails to develop or close properly. Typically occurring within the first 28 days of pregnancy while the neural tube is forming, Spina Bifida often develops before a woman even knows she is pregnant.

Children born with Spina Bifida typically undergo dozens of surgeries before they reach the age of 18. And during their lifetime, someone with Spina Bifida will face at least a \$1 million in medical expenses, including multiple surgeries.

Despite these challenges—and thanks to advances in research and medicine, along with policies supportive of children with this condition—nearly two-thirds of Americans currently living with Spina Bifida have made it to adulthood. And while these strides are certainly worth celebrating, people with Spina Bifida—particularly adults—continue to face a crisis of care that could be largely prevented with the right resources and policies.

While we have a coordinated system of care designed to treat children with Spina Bifida in the U.S., there is no equivalent for adults. The result is that adults face a "care cliff" and enter a very fractured medical system where they are unable to find physicians willing or even knowledgeable enough to provide treatment, as Spina Bifida is still largely taught in medical schools as a pediatric condition and education has failed to keep pace with the rapid rise in the adult Spina Bifida population. Thousands of adults are left with few options other than to seek care in the emergency room or continue to see their pediatric care team until insurance will no longer cover their care because of their age. And to make matters worse, many of these adults rely on Medicaid as their insurance provider, so even if they have the means to travel to an adult specialist, if they are located in another state—as is often the case—their coverage is denied. Across the country, there are more than 100 pediatric clinics devoted to caring for children with Spina Bifida. There are only 20 whose focus is on adults.

At the federal level, we could make dramatic improvements in the ability of adults with Spina Bifida to access quality care by increas-

ing the funding of the CDC's National Spina Bifida Program—the only federal program tasked with improving the care and outcomes for people living with Spina Bifida. In 2008, the Spina Bifida Program created a National Spina Bifida Patient Registry to collect the scientific data needed to evaluate existing medical services for Spina Bifida patients, and to provide clinicians, researchers, patients, and families, a window into what care models are effective and what treatments are not making a measurable difference. Building on this in 2014, the Spina Bifida Program funded the development of a Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network to identify and to disseminate best practices for the care of people with Spina Bifida at all ages. However, with only \$7.5 million in annual funding, there are only 11,000 patients in the national registry, limiting the ability of medical professionals to glean knowledge that would advance research in areas critical to improving quality of life. Even modest increases to this funding would make an enormous difference.

Additionally, we should urge NIH to work collaboratively across their many divisions to better understand Spina Bifida. As Spina Bifida can affect every organ and every system in the human body, a collaborative effort undertaken by NIH could result in research that would lead to better care for both this generation and future generations of Spina Bifida patients. Moreover, the new designation of those with disabilities as a health disparity creates a new opportunity to harness federal resources for the Spina Bifida community by ensuring their representation in NIH research and thereby recognizing those with this complex condition in a new and critical light.

We are so fortunate today that our country is benefiting from the talent and contributions of the first generation of adults living with Spina Bifida. Today, I honor and celebrate all of them, along with their care partners, and also remember those we have lost to this condition. I urge my colleagues to not only increase funding for the National Spina Bifida Program, but to work together so that these Americans receive the care and treatment all of us want for our families and loved ones.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY OF PASTOR CONWAY C. JOHNSON

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pastor Conway C. Johnson as he celebrates his 10th Pastoral Anniversary at Sharon Baptist Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey. Pastor Johnson continues to provide outstanding spiritual leadership and fellowship to the greater New Brunswick community.

Elected as pastor of Sharon Baptist Church on June 8, 2013, Pastor Johnson brought with him a wealth of experience when he began leading the congregation on August 4, 2013. Pastor Johnson entered the ministry at 18 and began his pastoral ministry at 28. Prior to his call to serve Sharon Baptist Church, Pastor Johnson led New Hope Baptist Church of Manitou Park for 10 years.

Under his leadership, the membership of Sharon Baptist Church has grown immensely. He has encouraged his congregants to practice faith in action, serving the needs of people through several worship and outreach ministries.

Pastor Johnson is married to his loving wife Nakia, and together they are blessed with five children. Supporting his spiritual and charitable journey, he holds a Master of Arts degree in Human Services from Lincoln University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, once again, please join me in celebrating the 10th Pastoral Anniversary of Pastor Conway C. Johnson. His leadership, service, and dedication to the church and community are truly deserving of this body's recognition.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL GIFT SHOP TAX ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Federal Gift Shop Tax Act, which would allow state and local governments to impose a sales tax at gift shops on federal property. These governments would be able to generate millions of dollars in new tax revenue.

When the federal government engages in activity that is not inherently governmental, such as operating a gift shop, there is no reason to exempt customer purchases from a sales tax. The items sold at federal gift shops, such as jewelry, apparel, accessories, games and books, are subject to a sales tax if sold on private property. Customers are often unaware of the exemption from a sales tax at gift shops on federal property, so the introduction of a sales tax is unlikely to have a significant impact on gift shop sales. It would, however, create a valuable revenue stream for state and local governments. In addition, state and local governments often provide uncompensated services on federal property, such as fire service, and allowing them to impose a sales tax at gift shops on federal property would allow them to recoup some of these costs.

This bill is of particular importance to the District of Columbia, which is home to a number of gift shops on federal property, such as at the Smithsonian Institution and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VAN RAALTE FARMHOUSE

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Van Raalte Farmhouse. The Van Raalte Farmhouse has been a staple of our West Michigan community for generations,

and we thank the City of Holland for preserving not only this site but the legacy of the Van Raalte family.

The farmland was purchased by the founder of Holland, Reverend Albertus Van Raalte, in 1847. The Reverend split the land between two of his children, Albertus and Benjamin, as a gift for their valiant service during the Civil War. Benjamin, a soldier in the Union Army who served in Michigan's 25th Infantry, purchased his brother's half of the land and constructed a beautiful neoclassical farmhouse on the property in the early 1870s. Benjamin cultivated the land for the remainder of his life, producing peaches and peony flowers. The farm became known as "The Maples" due to the large sugar maples grown on the property.

The farm stayed in the family for multiple generations until it was sold in the 1980s to the city of Holland, Michigan. Holland helped transform the farmhouse and its land into a beautiful park. In 1989, Van Raalte Farmhouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today, community members continue to enjoy hikes and picnics as well as cross-country skiing and sledding in the winter at the park.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in commemorating 150 years of history at the Van Raalte Farmhouse as the Van Raalte family's story and the farmhouse's beauty continue to inspire the people of Michigan's Fourth District.

ISRAEL AT WAR

HON. JENNIFER A. KIGGANS

OF VIRGINIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following message I shared on October 11 at a meeting of Jewish leaders with Governor Glenn Youngkin of Virginia at the offices of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater in Virginia Beach.

Thank you Governor Youngkin for your initiatives to fight the precipitous rise of anti-Semitism in these United States and around the world. Your very timely visit with us so shortly after the October 7 terrorist Hamas vicious attacks on Israel's innocent civilians near the Gaza border is deeply appreciated along with ordering the lowering of the flag throughout the Commonwealth. We turn to our shared one God of life's blessings who always brings us together to be one caring family, gratefully united and gloriously diverse, ever harkening onto the divine commandments of loving-kindness.

At this painfully trying time of excruciating anguish and an over-whelming sense of violation by heartless enemies of humanity and civilized society, evoking terrifying images of the Holocaust deeply seared within us and to which I can personally testify as son of Polish survivors who lost hundreds of murdered relatives, and one who spent his early childhood in Europe's transit and DP Camps, later growing up in Haifa, Israel and serving in the IDF in the 1960s.

Just as we did not allow ultimate victory to Nazism rooted in historical anti-Semitism, so we shall defeat, whatever the cost, those who now shamefully delight in the barbaric slaughter of Jewish babies and their shocked parents, mowing down hundreds of youth celebrating peace at a music festival along with rape and torture; dragging to cruel captivity the young as well as frail

Holocaust survivors who had found refuge in the world's only sovereign Jewish state and the Middle-East's only democracy. We shall never abandon our beloved Israeli sisters and brothers heroically fighting for the very survival of their ancestral homeland which they have already honored with remarkable accomplishments benefiting all humanity.

We are uplifted and reassured at this fateful hour of existential threat to Israel's very well-being by the incomparable Israeli-American alliance of shared values and interests that, no doubt, makes a critical difference for the defense of the entire free world. The Ford and Eisenhower strike groups whose homeport is Hampton Roads are truly a source of swelling pride. The recent historic strides toward lasting Middle East peace with the major inclusion at last of Saudi Arabia, likely pushed Iran and its proxies—the enemies of peace who glorify death and dying while the West sanctifies life and living—to this inhuman cowardice massive assault on a holy Jewish day—50 years and a day since the other traumatic surprise of the Yom Kippur War—with total disregard for basic human norms.

They will be held accountable. Perhaps it was also a failed attempt of divergence from the Ukraine tragedy. Restoring Israel's damaged deterrence is a must priority. The internal Israeli bitter divisions around misguided Judicial Reform were perceived to reflect a weakened society, though Israel unites in a national security emergency, but a heavy price is nonetheless exacted by an enemy tragically neglecting and sacrificing its own Palestinian people.

Oh God sustain our sacred resolve to face evil and subdue it with Shalom's eternal blessings that we shall not compromise over, of healing, hope and harmony. Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is founder and spiritual leader of Temple Lev Tikvah in Virginia Beach.

HONORING WHITNEY ANDERSON'S APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERALLY-INSURED CREDIT UNIONS

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Whitney Anderson on her recent election to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions (NAFCU). Credit unions play a vital role in our nation's banking ecosystem allowing more people to access capital, obtain mortgages, and receive other financial tools that are otherwise difficult to obtain. Additionally, I've seen firsthand in my district, how credit unions provided vital services during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that the smallest of businesses received the necessary aid to assist during such trying times.

Whitney currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Elements Financial, headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. She previously served as Chief Community Development Officer at Michigan State University Federal Credit Union, served as President of the Desk Drawer Fund, and President of Ever Green 3C. Additionally, Whitney has had significant community involvement on boards such as the African American Credit Union Coalition (AACUC) National Board, MLK Commission of Mid-Michigan, and United Way. Her