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HONORING THE LIFE OF
CLARENCE THORNTON

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of a dedicated patriot, Clarence Thornton, of Hampton, Connecticut. Mr. Thornton, a devoted veteran, husband, and father, passed away at the age of 101 on February 6, 2023.

Born in 1921, in Pomfret, Connecticut, to George Howard and Frances Thornton, Clarence was a beloved native of Eastern Connecticut. Through the nurturing of his family, Clarence's capacity for devotion to his community and country was endless. One of the most prominent and early examples of Clarence's devotion was by way of his service in the Army during World War II. Aged 21, Clarence heeded our Nation's call to action and began his service as a Heavy Truck Driver in 1942. Throughout his military career, Private First Class Thornton joined Allied forces in the campaign to liberate Europe and preserve world order, serving in the offensives of Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe. Clarence was presented with several ribbons and medals for his honorable service.

Upon his honorable discharge in December 1945, Clarence returned to his native state of Connecticut, settling in Hampton, where he found new ways to give back to his community. Due to his striking resemblance to Abraham Lincoln, Clarence frequently portrayed the President during the town's Memorial Day Parades. He was also a hard worker who contributed to the local economy by way of several trades, including his precise touch for furniture making and painting homes in the surrounding region.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent patriots who are as humble, dutiful, and service-oriented as Clarence Thornton. Clarence will be forever remembered for his devotion to his large family and is specifically survived by his children: Keith and Michelle Thornton, Patricia Goodwin, Robert Thornton, Sandra and "Stretch" Thornton, Sharron and James Dickson, Sharlene Thornton; sister, Elsie May Johnson, and an even greater extended family. He was a beloved figure in town and his loss will continue to be felt throughout the region. To that end, I ask that my colleagues join me in observing the loss of Clarence Thornton.

NATIONAL POLLUTANT DIS-
CHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM
(NPDES)

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, today I re-introduce an amendment to the Clean Water Act extending permit terms for publicly owned

water infrastructure projects under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). I thank my colleague Congressman KEN CALVERT (R-CA) for his support as the original cosponsor again this Congress.

This bipartisan bill would simply extend the NPDES permit term for projects owned and operated by local public agencies like water districts from the current 5 years up to 10 years. NPDES permit terms for private projects or industrial discharges would remain at the current 5-year term.

The United States has fallen behind many other developed nations in wastewater infrastructure, receiving a D-plus grade in the American Society of Civil Engineers' most recent report card. One reason for this lapse in infrastructure modernization is arbitrary permitting timetables imposed by federal law. Permit terms should match the construction timelines and on-the-ground reality for the projects to which those permits apply. This is currently not the case. With over 95 percent of wastewater infrastructure spending at the local level, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, lengthening permit terms for local governments would be one of the most expeditious ways to encouraging further investment in 21st-century wastewater treatment and water recycling facilities.

Current NPDES permitting under the Clean Water Act has a maximum term of 5 years, an arbitrary timeline that is impracticable given prolonged construction schedules for local public agencies. As a result, California's State Water Resources Control Board and Clean Water Act regulators in other states are overwhelmed with a backlog of NPDES permitting requests for existing projects. New public projects are significantly delayed by this unnecessary bureaucracy, which also prevents regulators like California's State Water Resources Control Board from focusing on watershed-scale planning and water quality standards.

My bill would alleviate this burden by extending the maximum permit to 10 years, helping local water agencies nationwide better implement the Clean Water Act and cutting the current permitting backlog in half. Extending NPDES permit terms is a practical solution that allows local agencies to meet regulatory standards while building public water projects that measurably improve water quality, which after all is the purpose of the Clean Water Act.

In October 2019, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure passed my bill to allow States to issue NPDES permits with terms up to 10 years as part of then-Chairman DeFazio's bipartisan "Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2019" (H.R. 1497). Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to cosponsor this bipartisan bill.

RECOGNIZING ALLEGHENY TOWN-
SHIP POLICE CHIEF LEO J.
BERG, III

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Allegheny Township Police Chief Leo J. Berg, III, and thank him for his 30 years of service to the Blair County community.

The hallmark of Chief Berg's time in law enforcement is the relationships he built within the community he served. From responding to medical emergencies to treating every person he met with respect and dignity, Chief Berg strived to treat everyone he interacted with fairly and with respect.

His tireless efforts to enforce the law and keep Blair County safe have been invaluable. Through his commitment to training and professionalism, the Chief has set an example for young officers that will continue to serve Allegheny Township well.

Chief Berg, and his wife of 39 years, Kim Berg, have been pillars of Allegheny Township, and in his retirement, Chief Berg will leave a lasting legacy.

On behalf of all of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank Chief Berg for his service and wish him every continued success.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, this February we celebrate the 23rd Black History Month. Black History Month is a time to honor the past contributions of Black people in American society and also to pay homage to those making progress currently and in the future. It is an annual celebration of achievements, reflection on challenges faced, and recognition of the central role of Black people in U.S. history.

Each Black History Month adopts a central theme. Last year's theme was "Black Health and Wellness;" this year, we focus on "Black Resistance." "Black Resistance" is a powerful message that refers to how, throughout history, African Americans have withstood, combatted, and opposed both intermittent or ongoing disadvantages and oppression. We've undergone being enslaved and having human and civil rights stripped away. For centuries, African Americans have faced enormous obstacles in numerous aspects of life, including education, economic security, healthcare, employment, housing, and criminal justice. African Americans routinely experience opportunity denial due to the color of our skin, and we continue to struggle for justice and equality for ourselves and communities in the face of systematic racism. In Chicago, as across the nation, Black families are more likely to live in poverty than white families, making it challenging to access decent education, health care, and other essential resources for a fulfilling life. Being Black in the United States is a complicated and multidimensional experience affected by historical, social, and cultural influences.

Black Resistance has helped overcome these barriers on the path to equality. African Americans have made enormous contributions to American culture, politics, and society. From the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter, Black people have battled for justice and equality. Their words and actions have molded the history and identity of our Nation. Black families have demonstrated Black Resistance—a remarkable endurance, fortitude, and perseverance in the face of adversity. Through all the pressures of life, Black

parents teach their children the meaning behind the color of their skin, to stay on the right side of the system, and to face a world that fears our physique. Despite centuries of challenges, Black parents have raised children who grew into the workers, professionals, parents, and communities who made this wonderful Nation what it is.

Black Resistance has helped us overcome barriers on the path to equality; yet recently, it seems that more obstacles arise with each hurdle we surmount. Instead of moving forward, it sometimes feels like we are stuck in an ongoing cycle of one-step-forward-two-steps-back. Black students in Chicago and across the nation are disproportionately likely to attend underfunded schools that lack resources and qualified teachers. This inequity often results in decreased academic achievement and diminished opportunities for success. Black parents must advise their children how to navigate the centuries-old barriers facing African Americans and hope the world doesn't take their babies from them. Too many Black mothers in the United States suffer from the agony of knowing that their child's last words were a call for them while being killed by the police. Further, some Republican leaders are aggressively pushing to eliminate the teaching of African-American history in classrooms, promising to exacerbate the ongoing education crisis and forcing the country to move backward instead of forward. Without education on the various accomplishments and failings of the past, future generations will be unprepared for the challenges ahead due to the lost lessons of history.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., recognized that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Regardless of the obstacles encountered, the Black community has a long, cultural tradition of activism and advocacy, and this Black Resistance advances the fight for justice and equality that Dr. King spoke of. In honor of Black History Month, I organized a town hall gathering to recognize the historical heroes and heroines, those from the past who have shaped our world and those from the present who are paving the path for future heroes and heroines. The event occurred on Sunday, February 19, 2023, at the Home of Life Missionary Baptist Church. During this event, I heard from residents about what policies on which they believe Congress should focus to continue bending the arc of the moral universe toward justice.

As we celebrate the 23rd Black History Month, I am reminded of Sam Cooke's hope: "It's been a long . . . time coming, but I know a change gonna come. Oh yes, it will." I have seen Black Resistance bring about such wonderful change in my lifetime. I am proud to celebrate this success, and I promise to continue fighting for equality and opportunity at every turn. Change is gonna come.

RECOGNIZING EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN VERA DEACON

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding constituent from my district. Vera Deacon, who after graduating

from the Abington Senior High School studied medical sciences at Penn State University and then obtained her license as a registered nurse at the Abington Hospital School of Nursing in 1977.

Vera served the community as an Emergency Department nurse at Abington Hospital and then Lehigh Valley Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital where she transitioned into the role of a PICC nurse and vascular access educator. As a driven patient advocate throughout her career, Vera participated in the reviews of PICC line device failures, efficacy, and the effects of short and long-term placements. As a CRNI and expert in the field, she has published several medical journal articles related to the elimination of infections in complex patient populations, and the Safe Medical Devices Act and its impact on clinical practice.

Missing the intensely challenging patient care opportunities of the hospital Emergency Department, Vera joined the Springtown Volunteer Fire Company to provide rescue services to her home community and was certified in Firefighter 1 and as a Basic Vehicle Rescue technician. After completing an EMT course, she joined Upper Bucks Regional EMS where she has consistently volunteered on-duty at its Springfield Township station every week and is an invaluable crew member with her extensive background in emergency medicine.

In addition to responding to 911 calls for medical emergencies, she now also serves Upper Bucks Regional EMS as the volunteer coordinator and the vice president and secretary of the Board of Directors. As if this service to the community wasn't enough, she also volunteered to review funding applications for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in Montgomery County and brought that knowledge and experience back to benefit her local Fire and EMS community. In 2022, Vera Deacon volunteered more than 252.5 hours at Upper Bucks Regional EMS and is therefore awarded the President's Silver Volunteer Service Award on behalf of our Nation.

We are incredibly grateful for the positive impact Vera has had through her long career of public service, and we wish Vera countless blessings into the future.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF RICHARD H. DEDRICK

HON. MARCUS J. MOLINARO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in remembrance of Richard H. Dedrick, a longtime friend and Tivoli neighbor who passed away on February 15 of this year.

Rich served his country honorably in the United States Air Force and was the Commander of Post 524 of the American Legion in Tivoli. His humor and wit lessened a debate and lightened the mood. Our service together in the village of Tivoli helped to make better the community and lives of those who called our corner of the world home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in honoring the memory of Richard H. Dedrick. While we mourn his passing, we celebrate his life and the legacy he leaves behind. May his life and memory always be a blessing.

CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY

HON. GUY RESCHENTHALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of Westmoreland County, the history of its people and their service to Western Pennsylvania.

Westmoreland County was founded on February 26, 1773 through an Act of Assembly signed by Governor John Penn. While the British already maintained a presence in the region, Westmoreland was the first county to be founded west of the Allegheny Mountains and represented a new frontier for Pennsylvania. Westmoreland's people endured hardships when the county was sought by Virginia during Dunmore's War. The county seal at Hannastown was attacked and burned by American Indians in 1782. Three years later, the county seat was moved to Greensburg where it stands today.

This new frontier also played a role in testing the strength of our country's leadership during the Whiskey Rebellions, when farmers from Western Pennsylvania fought back against the first federal tax on spirits. What could have been a far bloodier conflict was handled fairly but firmly by President George Washington and Pennsylvania's leaders, proving to the world that America could handle its own disputes without resorting to tyranny.

Although neighboring Allegheny County was first formed from parts of Westmoreland, their economic lives have remained inseparable. Westmoreland's plentiful coal resources fueled Pittsburgh's revolutionary steel industry, leading to the formation of Carnegie Steel by Westmoreland County native Henry Clay Frick. Wages from those same steel plants helped to draw workers and feed families across the Allegheny River. Farmlands of Westmoreland helped provide eggs, oats, and alfalfa to the rest of the Nation for years, cementing the county as an essential arm of American industry.

Mr. Speaker, the story of Westmoreland County is uniquely American and important to Pennsylvania. You cannot tell the story of our country without speaking of the people who worked hard to turn a frontier county into an engine of American industry. On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District, I congratulate the citizens of Westmoreland County on this remarkable milestone and look forward to building on this storied history over the next 250 years.

RECOGNIZING ARTHUR O. EVE, JR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 24, 2023

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate Arthur O. "Champ" Eve, Jr. on being recognized with the Erie County Democratic Committee's 2023 Joseph F. Crangle Legacy Award. This award rightfully acknowledges Champ's name as one of the great leaders of our party and commemorates his service to our community and the Democratic Party.