

In Charlie's time after war, he continued his second life of service as a high school teacher for building trades where he filled young minds with memories they still talk about today. He leaned into his passion as a sportsman by spending time hunting, fishing, and writing a weekly column named 'The Wild Side' which became a staple for the Western Montana community.

Charlie's life with his wife Clara was the epitome of the American dream and our state was made a better place because they called it home. History will know Charlie Dowd as one of the last living survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor, a Montana legend, and true American hero.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS EQUAL ACCESS ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today Representative MAST and I introduced the Veterans Equal Access Act. This legislation would provide equal access to state-legal medical marijuana for veterans participating in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care. It ends the harmful VA prohibition on doctors and health care providers giving opinions or recommendations on, or completing forms for, state-legal medical marijuana programs.

U.S. cannabis laws are broken, including our laws that govern veterans' access to medical cannabis. Many veterans report using cannabis for medical purposes as a substitute for prescription drugs. The VA National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has acknowledged that veterans use cannabis to relieve symptoms of PTSD, and that in many states PTSD is a qualifying condition for enrollment in medical cannabis programs.

Most states with state-legal medical cannabis programs require some sort of recommendation or approval from a medical provider for patients to enroll in the program. However, VA policy prevents VA physicians and care providers from any participation, including helping with the required paperwork or forms.

This forces veterans to seek care outside of the VA system to receive medical cannabis recommendations, which can interrupt continuity of care, lead to mistakes or gaps in care, and require veterans to pay out of pocket for additional physician visits. VA physicians should not be denied the ability to offer a recommendation that they think may meet the needs of their patients. And veterans should not be forced outside the VA system to seek treatment that is legal in their state.

The Veterans Equal Access Act would allow VA doctors and healthcare providers to give their opinions or recommendations on medical cannabis and to complete forms in compliance with state-legal medical marijuana programs.

I look forward to working with my co-leads, Representative BRIAN MAST and Senators JACKY ROSEN, and my colleagues in the House and Senate to enact this legislation and provide equal access to state-legal medical cannabis for our veterans participating in VA health care.

HONORING THE SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS BAR ASSOCIATION ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the South Hampton Roads Bar Association on its 100th Anniversary.

The South Hampton Roads Bar Association, initially called the Tidewater Bar Association, was formed in October 1923 to empower African American attorneys in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. Members of the association promoted the advancement of African Americans in the Commonwealth of Virginia and fought against the unjust practices of segregation and racial discrimination.

As one of the oldest African American bar associations in the nation, the South Hampton Roads Bar Association remains active and supports racial equality within the legal community in the Hampton Roads area. It is comprised of members that have distinguished themselves as devoted Commonwealth Attorneys, state and federal judges, members of the Virginia General Assembly and city councils. Through their present work, they are continuing the legacy of the founding members to strive towards racial equality and to build a community focused on opportunities for all.

I want to thank Attorney W. Marcus Scriven, the current President of the South Hampton Roads Bar Association, for his leadership and dedication to the organization's mission. I also want to thank all prior presidents and the many African American legal professionals who laid the foundation for this association to thrive for so long.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to congratulate the member of the South Hampton Roads Bar Association on the many hard-fought battles won since their inception 100 years ago and wish them many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 167, I mistakenly voted no when I intended to vote yes.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER L.C. "BUCKSHOT" SMITH

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of long-time law enforcement Officer L.C. "Buckshot" Smith of the Camden Police Department. This week, at 93 years old, Officer Smith will be retiring after over 60 years of invaluable service to the people of Camden, Arkansas.

Officer Smith's dedication to protecting and serving the people of his community goes deeper than just his badge; it's in his heart. His true character has been evident through the relationships he's built within the community he's served for so long. Throughout his record-long career, Officer Smith has treated everyone in Camden with the utmost fairness and respect. He's held the nickname "Buckshot" for most of his life, and everyone in Camden knows him as such.

While he will surely be missed by the Camden Police Department, his 60-plus years of service will be remembered forever. Officer Smith is a beloved member of the community, and his legacy will go down in history as one that was built on the Golden Rule to treat others as you would want to be treated.

I'm proud to recognize Officer L.C. "Buckshot" Smith for his historic career in law enforcement, and I want to thank him for making such a deep and lasting impact on his community, the 4th District of Arkansas, and our country. I hope his record of service will be an inspiration to all who follow in his footsteps.

HONORING YVETTE BENARROCH

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2023

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I rise today to recognize Yvette Benarroch whose lifelong dedication toward serving her country and her community has had a significant impact on Southwest Florida.

Born in Luquillo, Puerto Rico, Yvette began her time in public service in the United States Air Force, serving in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm before returning to Puerto Rico. After earning her bachelor's degree in marketing from Interamerican University of Puerto Rico and attaining her master's degree in marketing from Southern New Hampshire University, Yvette began her professional career in public relations and education. She later became a successful entrepreneur.

However, Yvette never lost her servant-leader spirit inspired by her time in service to her country. She maintains that her "service to her country has no expiration date." Since moving to Naples, Florida in 2003, Yvette has served as a volunteer and board member in various local nonprofit organizations, further investing in her community by coordinating several hurricane relief efforts and food collection drives. When her community needed her the most, Yvette was always there. Yvette's staunch commitment toward helping her community has been both an inspiration and a blessing to those around her.

Motivated by her love of country, her conservative values, and her dedication to service, Yvette soon found herself involved in local, state, and federal politics. Additionally, Yvette also served as Vice Chairwoman for the Collier County GOP from 2020 to 2022 and was a former State Vice Chairwoman for the Republican National Hispanic Assembly of Florida. Today, she is the second Vice President for the Florida Federation of Republican Women.

Yvette's persistent drive to continue her involvement in her community, specifically in

Collier County, demonstrates her character and profound love for her country. Throughout her distinguished career and service, she has educated, motivated, engaged, and empowered other women and American Hispanics. She has inspired others to become leaders in politics and civic engagement. Yvette is a grassroots leader and conservative activist whose impact extends through Southwest Florida and beyond. Somehow, in addition to Yvette's work, she finds the time to play tennis, ballroom dance, and spend time with her husband, two sons, and their loyal golden retrievers Rocky and Lucky.

Mr. Speaker, as a lifelong public servant and true patriot, Yvette has proven time and time again her unwavering commitment to the community. It is a privilege to honor her today, and to thank her for her dedication, hard work, and service on behalf of our community and country.

LOWER ENERGY COSTS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1) to lower energy costs by increasing American energy production, exports, infrastructure, and critical minerals processing, by promoting transparency, accountability, permitting, and production of American resources, and by improving water quality certification and energy projects, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I am here today to voice my strong opposition to H.R. 1—because it will not and never could lower energy costs, and it is not taking the long view of where this Nation must go to reach true energy independence.

Too often when policy makers talk about energy there are too many sound bites and not enough balanced common-sense approaches to our Nation's energy future.

The economy and energy consumption are critically linked to each other because economic activity requires energy consumption.

We all know that the booming economy under President Biden has led to energy demand increases and that the war in Ukraine although far from our shores has impacted global energy supply and as a consequence the price of energy.

President Biden took decisive action that has led to the sixth consecutive month of reductions in inflation across the entire economy and includes prices at gas pumps.

Democrats who took decisive action in the 117th Congress to take control of United States' energy future made major investments in renewable energy that is creating jobs, lowering the cost of energy and putting American consumers first.

The oil and gas industries fueled the economic growth and global success of the United States in the last century and without a doubt bolstered the economy that created the largest middle class in our Nation's history.

Oil and gas today and into the near future will continue to play an important role in the

Nation's strategic and economic interest well into this century.

It is important to note that some of the big wins from the Inflation Reduction Law will be the oil and gas industries, which has made significant investments in renewable energy already.

It is a simple fact that the owners and operators of the energy delivery infrastructure in the United States—the pipelines, electric power grids, and gasoline distribution hubs that supply energy to an overwhelming majority of homes and businesses in the United States is not going to change anytime soon.

The Inflation Reduction Law included multiple oil and gas leasing reforms to reflect today's pursuit of offshore oil and gas exploration while at the same time incentivizing the pursuit of wind and solar by the oil and gas industry.

The Inflation Reduction Law will issue in the Energy Age that will bridge the gap between the old and the new forms of energy that will continue to fuel the American economy.

This is not nor should it be viewed as a war against the old and new forms of energy but a bridge that will allow a smooth transition to the many facets of energy provision that will mean prosperity and jobs, while providing low-cost affordable energy for all people.

My greatest concern is that H.R. 1, if it becomes law, would roll back, important reforms by lowering royalty rates, repealing interest fees, and reinstating noncompetitive leasing.

H.R. 1 rubber-stamps the construction of new natural gas pipelines—which is already frighteningly easy—while shutting every agency, apart from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, out of the review process.

Natural gas is a viable and important component of energy security for the United States, but its extraction, processing, and delivery to consumers does come with risks.

Natural gas in its raw form is odorless and colorless—an odor is added so that people can detect its presence and respond to the threat before it is too late.

It is important that safeguards remain in place regarding exploration to protect gas field workers and people who may be in the vicinity of exploration activities.

H.R. 1, also poses risks to the United States strategic interest because it removes the requirement that Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports be determined to be in the public interest before being sent overseas, tearing down guardrails that prevent our adversaries from purchasing more of our energy to use against us.

H.R. 1 poses risks to our national parks and public treasures because it would bypass the local and public interest in national lands by allowing oil and gas lease sales even if there is no national interest to support approval of the sale of mineral leases on these lands.

The sale of leases on land that is owned by the American people should solely be in the interest of the people of the United States and this can be determined by identifying that there are no nonpublic sources of oil and gas to meet demand.

The Nation is on the road toward a smooth transition to other forms of energy to complement its use of oil and gas that will result in a balance of energy options for a more stable, more affordable, and reliable energy supply.

The Nation's current mining law is over 150 years old and does need updating, but it

should be done so with all stakeholders at the table with a win-win approach.

H.R. 1 makes this dangerous status quo worse.

H.R. 1 allows mining on public land and the dumping of toxic mining waste as the “highest and best use” of those lands, which means the lands will not be suitable for a return to public use without a significant investment by taxpayers to cleanup and restore it to a natural state.

I am not saying that all mining or exploration companies will follow the letter of the law—in H.R. 1 should it become law, but if only a few mining leases leave mining waste on public land and are so reckless as to not restore land to its original state the damage would be significant.

H.R. 1 would also allow extraction of valuable minerals without paying the owners of the land—the American people in strict violation of every principle of oil and gas leasing.

Private property owners who lease for oil and gas exploration expect to be compensated for the lease of their land—the American taxpayer should not expect any less from the lease of their public land held by the Federal government.

Letting mining companies continue to extract valuable minerals from public lands without paying anything to the American people is establishing a dangerous precedent for private landowners with minerals, oil, or gas—one that I am sure the people in Texas, Alaska and other high exploration states would take offense over.

To date, mining companies—many of which are foreign-owned—have already extracted an estimated \$300 billion in minerals from public lands and caused untold damage, without paying a single dime to American taxpayers.

H.R. 1 does nothing to improve tribal consultation, even though the vast majority of minerals needed for clean energy are located within 35 miles of tribal lands.

The Nation is in the process of transitioning from primary relying on oil and as a source of energy to alternative sources.

The transition from fossil fuels to low-carbon energy sources will depend heavily on the adoption of critical minerals.

Our Nation's clean energy transition will require new minerals, but mining must not come at the cost of our health, our environment, or our special places.

I am very committed to—making sure that the emergence and adoption of new energy sources does not leave environmental victims along the way.

I am aware of one company, Critical Mineral Refining (CMR) of Houston Texas, that has made environmentally sound extraction, transporting and mining of critical minerals its core mission.

CMR's process has been certified by the Environmental Protection Agency as environmentally neutral technology—which means that there is no harm to the water, soil, or air.

Today, as we work to bring new forms of energy to the marketplace and because there are technologies that are cleaner and safer to conduct energy extraction, transportation, and refining these approaches should be adopted as industry standards.

The application of this knowledge to critical minerals will prevent sickness, accidents, and deaths due to antiquated approaches to mining and refining being applied to rare earth