

He piloted his heavily damaged plane and returned to the carrier USS *Oriskany*, where, unable to slow his descent, he landed dead center of the runway but at 170 knots and miraculously engaged the number 3 wire.

Because of the implications of a “hot” engagement in 1952 between the United States and the Soviet Union, official records credited Williams with only a single kill, 1 damaged enemy, and he was awarded the Silver Star. The true account of his actions was classified, and Williams was asked—and agreed—to alter his story for the public and keep the true account secret.

Convinced this was a story that needed to be told, Operation Just Reward was formed by Royce Williams’ determined friends and fellow pilots: Doniphan B. Shelton, RADM, USN (Ret.), Greg “Chaser” Keithley, Peter Rolf Ohnstad, Tammy Sande, Ed “Dragon” Riley, Kim A. Merrill, Chuck Sweeney, Steve Lewandowski, Chris Yates, and Howard Darter. I am honored to have been invited to join this campaign on behalf of history’s true account of America’s true Top Gun—and for Royce Williams to gain this recognition that he has not sought, but so richly deserves.

HOMETOWN HERO—TOM LANDIS

**HON. BETH VAN DUYNÉ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2023*

Ms. VAN DUYNÉ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tom Landis, the founder of Howdy Homemade Ice Cream in Dallas, Texas. Howdy Homemade was founded with the idea to create more jobs for individuals with special needs by uniting with delicious ice cream.

Howdy Homemade was created in Dallas, Texas in December of 2015. Tom founded his business with the purpose of giving the special needs communities meaningful employment opportunities in a positive environment. Tom gives people with intellectual or developmental disabilities confidence, structure, and a sense of pride by working at Howdy Homemade. Tom has since created over 168 jobs throughout the U.S. and is consistently giving individuals with special needs an outstanding employment opportunity in a reinforcing environment.

I commend Tom for going above and beyond for our community. His selflessness and dedication do not go unnoticed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION REAL ESTATE LEASING AUTHORITY REVOCATION ACT

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2023*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Securities and Exchange Commission Real Estate Leasing Authority Revocation Act, which would revoke the real estate leasing

authority of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and direct the Government Accountability Office to update its 2016 report on independent leasing authority in the federal government. The House passed this bill last Congress.

Since the SEC was granted leasing authority in 1990, before I came to Congress, the SEC has consistently stumbled through leasing mistakes at great expense to taxpayers. It is time for Congress to end this fiasco and return the leasing authority to the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal government’s real estate arm, like other federal agencies.

When Congress exempted the SEC from GSA regulations and directives in 1990, it expressed its clear intent that “the authority granted to the Commission to lease its own office space directly will be exercised vigorously by the Commission to achieve actual cost savings and to increase the Commission’s productivity and efficiency.” (H.R. Conf. Rep. 101–924.) Over the past 30 years, none of that has come to fruition.

The SEC did not even establish a Leasing Branch until April 2009, and did not put into place any leasing policies or procedures until August 2010. Before that, in May 2005, the SEC disclosed that it had identified unbudgeted costs of approximately \$48 million attributable to misestimates and omissions of costs associated with the construction of its headquarters near Union Station. In 2007, after moving into its headquarters, the SEC shuffled its employees to different office spaces at a cost of over \$3 million without any cost-benefit analysis or justifiable rationale.

In the summer of 2010, the SEC’s Office of Administrative Services (OAS) conducted a deeply flawed and unsound analysis to justify the need for the SEC to lease 900,000 square feet of space at Constitution Center and to commit over \$500 million over 10 years, overestimating the amount of space needed by over 300 percent. In addition to this gross overestimation of space, OAS failed to provide complete and accurate information and prepared a faulty and backdated Justification and Approval after it had already signed the lease.

As a former chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, I was deeply involved in oversight of the SEC’s real estate activities in the District of Columbia after the agency engaged in this improper sole-source procurement of nearly one million square feet of leased space. We held two hearings on this subject in 2011. At the first hearing, titled “The Security and Exchange Commission’s \$500 Million Fleecing of America,” SEC Inspector General H. David Kotz testified that employees ignored the SEC chair’s explicit instructions and engaged in possible criminal violations in a sole-source procurement. He also supported stripping the SEC of leasing authority if the SEC did not undertake major reforms. I agreed with Inspector General Katz’s evaluation and introduced legislation to revoke the SEC’s leasing authority for the first time.

At the second hearing, titled “The Security and Exchange Commission’s \$500 Million Fleecing of America: Part Two,” SEC Chairwoman Mary L. Schapiro testified that “the SEC recognizes the benefits of having [GSA]

manage the Commission’s future lease acquisitions. Leasing is not part of the Commission’s core mission and we cannot allow it to impede that mission.” She then explained that the SEC would pare down its leasing program “solely to liaise with GSA.” This arrangement, in which GSA manages SEC leasing activities, was memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding between GSA and the SEC on August 1, 2011.

Today, I have concerns that the SEC is going back on the commitment it made to Congress, which is why I am reintroducing this bill. In August 2016, GSA and the SEC entered into an Occupancy Agreement to authorize GSA to conduct the process for a new 15-year lease. In December 2016, GSA, with the approval of the SEC, submitted a prospectus to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for approximately 1,274,000 rentable square feet for the SEC. Congress approved this prospectus in 2018, and by July 2019, GSA had received final bids, resolved all protests and even selected a final bidder. A month later, in August 2019, the SEC canceled the Occupancy Agreement with GSA, citing concerns about the value of the purchase option that was part of the lease, concerns the SEC refused to document to Congress. The SEC effectively vetoed the entire procurement process despite not having the authority or funding mechanism to exercise the purchase option without GSA’s involvement. After a few more months of impasse, the SEC requested that GSA cancel the procurement and commence a new procurement process.

Finally, after much back and forth between the two agencies, GSA entered into a lease for a new SEC headquarters in September 2021. The SEC says it will continue to have GSA do its leasing in the future, but the SEC’s history of egregious leasing conduct, having squandered hundreds of millions of dollars, makes this bill still necessary.

These public blunders also risk undermining the reputation of GSA and the federal government among developers and building owners that participate in these lease procurements and ultimately driving up the costs of all GSA real estate procurements due to the threat of uncertainty. This also means that the SEC will continue to engage in short-term leases at a premium while the procurement process plays out again, instead of quickly transitioning to a more cost-effective long-term lease as planned. Congress created this confusion by granting the SEC leasing authority, and now Congress must fix it by revoking that authority.

The SEC’s mission is to protect investors; maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets; and facilitate capital formation. GSA’s mission is to provide other civilian federal agencies with workspace and furnishings at best value to the taxpayer. As the SEC has demonstrated over three decades, it is incredibly inefficient, wasteful and redundant to have the SEC involved in the nuances of real estate decisions when GSA exists for that very reason. Like other federal agencies, the SEC would continue to have input and involvement in the decision-making process, but the ultimate real estate authority would lie with GSA, where it belongs.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

RECOGNIZING THE SECOND STREET DAIRY QUEEN ON BEING NAMED NUMBER ONE STORE IN THE NATION

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 17, 2023*

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Manchester Dairy Queen on Second Street for finishing 2022 as the highest earning Dairy Queen store in the country. Out of 4,353 locations, the store on Second Street stood out as the highest performing in the nation thanks to their invested leadership

and equally dedicated staff. This tremendous accomplishment is a testament to the store's commitment to the city of Manchester and the decades-long connections they've forged with local business owners and lovers of cold Blizzards.

Since the 1970s, the Dion family has been a mindful steward of the franchise and has expanded its presence across Southern New Hampshire. Despite their tremendous growth, the Dions always centered their business around the fundamental values of community outreach, integrity, and service with a smile. In the face of major recessions and a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, the Dairy Queen on Second Street has continued to adapt and evolve into the thriving business it is today. As a fellow

restaurant owner, I have seen the challenges posed by COVID-19 in the industry and commend the Dion family for their can-do attitude which has seen them claim the number one spot in the nation for Dairy Queens.

I look forward to seeing all that the Second Street Dairy Queen accomplishes in the years to come, and I know that the citizens of Manchester will continue to show their unequivocal support for one of the area's most frequented stops for a quick bite and an ice-cold scoop. On behalf of the constituents of New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I commend the Dion family and their amazing staff for making the Second Street Dairy Queen the highest earning store in the nation, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors.