

passion for music and teaching. May God bless her and her loved ones.

TRIBUTE TO CHANCHANIT
MARTORELL—30TH CONGRES-
SIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF
THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women during Women's History Month. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Chanchanit Martorell of the Park La Brea neighborhood of Los Angeles, California.

Ms. Martorell was born in Thailand and raised in Los Angeles. She attended the University of California, Los Angeles where she received a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in urban planning. She was also conferred an honorary doctorate degree in social work from Pacific Oaks College.

For over 3 decades, Chanchanit has been involved in social activism. In the early 1990s, she documented the demographics and human and social service needs of Thais in Los Angeles in a landmark community needs assessment study to advocate for more resources in underserved communities. Currently, Ms. Martorell serves as Executive Director of the Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC). She established this non-profit organization in 1994 with the goal to improve the lives of Thai immigrants through services that promote economic self-sufficiency and cultural adjustment. In 1999, Thai CDC, under Chanchanit's leadership, played a role in the 8-year long community organizing campaign which raised community awareness and led to the designation of the first Thai Town in the country in East Hollywood.

Devoted to social and economic justice, Chanchanit actively serves in an array of capacities, including the Los Angeles County District Attorney Asian American Pacific Islander Advisory Board and Los Angeles Food Policy Council Leadership Circle. She is also the co-founder of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, the Rotary Club of Thai Town, the Asian Pacific Islander Small Business Program, the Asian Pacific Islander Human Trafficking Task Force, and the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development. Ms. Martorell is most notably known for her work on more than 6 major human rights cases involving more than 2,000 Thai victims of human trafficking who were discovered working in conditions of slavery in the United States. Her advocacy on behalf of the victims and the success of each case led her to become an in-demand spokesperson and leading expert on the issue of modern-day slavery.

Chanchanit has received numerous awards and honors for her exceptional service to the community, including the Asian Americans for Equality "Dream of Equality" Award, KCET Unsung Hero Award, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance Distinguished Service Award,

Los Angeles Women's Foundation Mentor Award, Phenomenal Woman Award from California State University, Northridge, the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies Award, and the Royal Decoration of the Most Admirable Order of the Direkgunabhorn from His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand. Ms. Martorell has been married to her husband, Esteban Martorell since 1994 and has 2 grown sons.

I ask all Members to join me in honoring this exceptional, well-respected woman of California's 30th Congressional District, Chanchanit Martorell.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, today, I was unavoidably detained attending to important matters in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted NO on the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question (H. Res. 614), NO on H. Res. 614, YES on Ryan Amendment No. 1, NO on Ogles Amendment No. 2, NO on Greene Amendment No. 3, NO on Greene Amendment No. 34, NO on Bost Amendment No. 35, NO on Rosendale Amendment No. 37, NO on Roy Amendment No. 38, NO on Roy Amendment No. 39, NO on Roy Amendment No. 40, and NO on Zinke Amendment No. 41.

COMMEMORATING THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, fifty-eight years ago, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became a staple in the fight to expand democracy to all Americans. Unfortunately, much of the ground gained from the law has since eroded. After the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* that stripped essential oversight provisions from the Voting Rights Act, a tidal wave of anti-democratic practices washed over our country to systematically disenfranchise Black and brown voters, harkening back to the Jim Crow south.

Over the past decade, Republicans have implemented restrictive changes to voting practices to intentionally exclude groups of voters. These tactics include reducing the number of polling locations to leave out locations where Democratic voters live, placing limitations on early voting and mail-in voting, implementing strict voter-id laws, gerrymandering voting-districts, enabling armed individuals to intimidate voters and election officials, purging voters from voter rolls, and declaring election fraud when Democratic candidates win. Furthermore, Republicans and right-wing media figures have spread incendiary lies about the U.S. election integrity, leading to far-right extremists storming the Capitol in a failed attempt to prevent the certification of the 2020 presidential election results.

The idea of democracy is sacred. Democracy promotes self-governance. Democracy

promotes settling our differences non-violently and the peaceful transition of power. Democracy promotes tolerance and inclusion. We stand at an unprecedented point in American history where the very existence of our democracy hangs in the balance. We must prevent extreme political actors from implementing anti-democratic voting practices.

I am proud of the work Illinois has done to protect voting rights. For example, all Cook County polling locations offer same-day voter registration on election day. Additionally, Illinois has open-access to mail-in-voting. These provisions make it easier to vote, not harder. These provisions support greater democratic participation, not less. However, these provisions do not go far enough. Congress must protect, defend, and expand democracy at the federal level.

Two years ago, the House passed the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021, a bill that would require states to receive federal preclearance before implementing changes to voting practices if they have demonstrated a history of voting rights abuses over the past 25 years. The bill would restore the oversights stripped from the Voting Rights Act by *Shelby County v. Holder*. Congress must enact the Voting Rights Advancement Act and bills like it if we are to ensure the survival of American democracy.

Recent Supreme Court decisions on reproductive rights and affirmative action demonstrate that the struggle for equality has not ended for many groups in this country. We cannot grow complacent with the political victories secured thus far. We must defend the rights for which we have fought so hard, and we must remain steadfast in our march toward a true democracy where all citizens have the opportunity to participate equally.

As we celebrate the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, I know that democracy will persevere as the foundation of America because we will ensure that it does.

HONORING SANTOS RODRIGUEZ OF THE CITY OF DALLAS

HON. JASMINE CROCKETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, it is with heartfelt sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of Santos Rodriguez—a young soul whose life was tragically cut short 50 years ago. On July 24, 1973, this innocent 12-year-old boy from Dallas, Texas, fell victim to an appalling act of violence that shook our Nation's conscience and forever changed the lives of his family and community.

On that fateful night, a Dallas police officer z—who was entrusted with protecting and serving the community—took Santos and his brother, David, from their home while responding to a call about a petty theft at a local gas station in the Little Mexico neighborhood. The two brothers were still in their pajamas as they were handcuffed and placed in a police car. In a shocking display of recklessness, the police officer aimed his gun at Santos' head and engaged in a lethal game of Russian roulette. Santos denied any involvement in the crime. Tragically, when the trigger was pulled—the gun fired. Santos was killed as his brother

watched from the backseat. On July 24, 1973, young Santos Rodriguez was taken away from his loved ones in a brutal act of violence, shattering the dreams he had yet to fulfill.

As the Congressional representative for the Little Mexico neighborhood—what is now known as Uptown—I feel a deep responsibility not only to honor the memory of Santos, but also to stand in solidarity with the Mexican-American community of Dallas as we continue the fight for equality. Santos Rodriguez's story remains a stark reminder of the continued need for oversight within our law enforcement system and the devastating impact of unchecked abuses of power. His untimely death exposed the harsh realities faced by marginalized communities and the profound importance of addressing racial injustice.

Residents of the City of Dallas have a right to know the truth of their city. We have a right to live in a city governed by leaders who believe that the only way towards a more equitable future requires us to reconcile with our past. While we remember Santos Rodriguez, let us also honor his memory by recommitting ourselves to creating a safer and more equitable Dallas. In his memory, we must strive for a future where no child or individual lives in fear, where persons in positions of authority are held to the highest standards of integrity, and where the tragedies of our past are never forgotten.

In 1973, the story of Santos' murder inspired the Chicano movement in North Texas. In the five decades since that heart-wrenching event, we have seen the community of Dallas and the nation rally together in solidarity to demand change. Santos Rodriguez's memory has become a symbol of resilience inspiring movements for justice, equality, and meaningful police reform.

Today, as we solemnly remember Santos, let us recommit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and fairness, and strive for a society where no life is ever again lost to such senseless acts of violence. May his legacy embolden us to continue our fight for a more inclusive and compassionate nation, where all citizens can trust in the fairness of our law enforcement and justice systems.

As we offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Santos Rodriguez and his loved ones, we must honor his memory by taking concrete steps towards a future where every child's dreams can flourish without fear or prejudice. In his memory, let us strive for a Nation that upholds the values of justice, empathy, and equality for all.

I stand with the residents of Dallas as we continue to march forward in a steadfast and unrelenting pursuit of justice. My thoughts and prayers are with all the people whose lives have been touched by the legacy of Santos Rodriguez. May his spirit live forever in our hearts, and may his legacy continue to inspire us to lead with love and guide us towards a more just and equitable society.

COMMEMORATING THE
RETIREMENT OF JOHN ELSESSER

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enthusiastically honor and congratulate a

true pillar of public service in municipal governance, John Elsesser of Coventry, Connecticut. John is retiring this year from his role as Town Manager for the Town of Coventry—a position he has held since 1988. His almost 4 decades of selfless advocacy for his community and all municipalities has been felt from the halls of local government all the way to the chambers of Connecticut's General Assembly in Hartford and the U.S. Capitol. John's expertise and ability will be sorely missed.

John began his journey in public service when he started as an administrative assistant in Wethersfield soon after his graduation from the University of Hartford with a master's in public administration in 1982. John's competency and skill navigating the complexities of town government were quickly recognized. Not long after his initial employment with the Town of Wethersfield, he transitioned over to the nearby government of Avon, Connecticut as its Assistant Town Manager.

In May of 1988, John rose to the pinnacle of his profession when he began his tenure fully in charge as Coventry's Town Manager. Once there, he quickly established himself as an indispensable advocate for the municipality, while simultaneously he brought an enlightened form of town administration for all the departments under his control. John successfully operationalized his vision for Coventry and has been responsible for countless, necessary upgrades to the town's functioning. He secured funding to update the town's administrative software and oversaw a bond rating upgrade by Moody's in a time of great fiscal instability for Connecticut. John has been wildly successful in securing grant money for Coventry, garnering over \$57 million in state and federal funding the past year and a half alone for the town—money which has been used to spearhead infrastructure upgrades and create more pedestrian-friendly roads.

Collaboration has been a cornerstone of John's leadership style, holding a great respect for Coventry's Town Council and working within the legislative framework they provided. He formed partnerships with organizations like the University of Connecticut and Connecticut Department of Agriculture to improve the quality of life for residents in Coventry. Most importantly, John was paramount in the creation of a positive culture of staff and volunteers. As a municipal leader of a small, eastern Connecticut town, John knew the importance volunteers and administrators play in rural civic ecosystems. It stands as a testament to John's community-centric mindset that he laments being unable to construct a community center during his time.

John's expertise and excellence has been recognized both statewide and nationally. He has served as President of the CT Town & City Management Association, the Council of Small Towns, and the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce. These local initiatives band town leaders together to coordinate resources, fund improvements and boost the economy for participating towns. John's leading role in all these groups indicates how widely he has been recognized for his accomplishments. Governor Ned Lamont appointed John to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 2019, an advisory organization dedicated to studying issues and recommend solutions in and for state and local government. In 2021, he was recognized for his re-

markable 40 years of municipal service—a reflection of his successful work with local government. As a former state legislator from a “next door” district in the Town of Vernon in the late 1980's and early 1990's, I saw firsthand his activist work to remind the General Assembly of the importance of small, rural communities to our state's quality of life. As the Congressman representing Coventry for the last 17 years, it has been a pleasure to work with John on securing funding for from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development program, the American Rescue Plan, the new infrastructure law, and the green energy initiatives in the Inflation Reduction Act. John's understanding of the nuances of formula grant funding and competitive grants was extraordinary. I was constantly struck by the realization of how blessed his town was to have such a talented, caring person at the helm.

Mr. Speaker, John Elsesser has been an exceptional public servant throughout his life. He is deserving of a happy and relaxing retirement in this next stage of his life, along with his wife, Holly. Eastern Connecticut's roots are in local leadership. As the longest-known-serving Town Manager at the time of his retirement—throughout our entire state of 169 towns—John has inherently reflected those roots through his loyalty to public service and his neighbors. John leaves behind an immeasurable legacy of stalwart advocacy and stewardship, and his retirement will leave a large gap in northeast Connecticut's civic fauna. We can take solace, though, in the knowledge that John's tireless work will be felt in Coventry, the northeast region, and state, for decades to come.

TRIBUTE TO DELORES SHINE
KERR—30TH CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women during Women's History Month. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District. I would like to recognize a remarkable woman, Delores Shine Kerr of the Miracle Mile/Mid-Wilshire neighborhood of Los Angeles, California.

Delores is an extraordinary woman whose remarkable life and diverse career as an educator, performer and humanitarian has spanned nearly 7 decades.

Born in Alabama, Delores received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing Education at the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University), where she was crowned Miss Tuskegee in 1957. She obtained her teaching credential at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her illustrious career in the health care field began in a Los Angeles hospital in the late 1950's as a Cardiac-Medical Staff Nurse, Psychiatric Nurse, and Psychiatric Treatment Instructor, followed by employment at another hospital where she was Head Nurse of Pediatrics, Assistant Director of Nursing, and an Emergency Room Nurse. In 1968, she began