

and NJMEP were swift in identifying critical actions that governments could take to shield manufacturers from bearing the brunt of the impact. Whether it was prioritizing the health and equipment needs of frontline workers or advocating for manufacturers to be properly deemed as essential businesses, John's expertise and decisive leadership was invaluable.

In a similar way, Mr. Kennedy was immensely involved when Congress was drafting the CHIPS and Science Act last year. He provided strategic clarity about how to best protect and secure our domestic and international supply chains, the lifeblood of our Nation's economy. Thanks to him and his insightful recommendations, we included provisions in the bill that established a National Supply Chain Database, a landmark program that accurately tracks American manufacturing capabilities and inventories in real time. Because of John, our economy is now more secure against not only global pandemics, but also natural disasters, cyberattacks, foreign adversaries, and a myriad of other threats.

Beyond his professional career, Mr. Kennedy takes time to give back to the community. Prior to serving at NJMEP, he founded and sold two manufacturing businesses which provided him firsthand knowledge of the sector. He has also served on the local and national executive board for the Boy Scouts, the New Jersey Special Olympics, and the board of directors of the Park Avenue Club Foundation.

Today, I join his loving wife Cecelia, their son Sean, and all New Jerseyans in congratulating Mr. John W. Kennedy on his storied career and selfless service. Thanks to his dedicated leadership, not only has our economy created untold prosperity, we have also secured that prosperity for future generations. He is a shining example of why "Made in the USA" and "Made in New Jersey" are the best labels in the world.●

#### TRIBUTE TO PHYLLIS SALOWE-KAYE

● Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to recognize and celebrate Mrs. Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, an exemplary leader in New Jersey and a lifelong advocate for social and economic justice.

Born and raised in Bradley Beach, Mrs. Salowe-Kaye graduated from Asbury Park High School and received her bachelor of arts in education from Boston University. In college, she began staging her first political actions: demonstrating against the Vietnam war and starting a "food fight" to protest poor cafeteria options. After earning her diploma, Phyllis began a teaching career in the city of Newark, ultimately rising to become a leader in the Newark Teachers Union.

It was in this role advocating for better conditions on behalf of her fellow educators that a fire was lit inside her.

After nearly a decade as an elementary school teacher, she transitioned to organizing for more affordable housing. First as president of the tenant association in her building, then with the local tenants association in the city of Orange, and finally as head of the New Jersey Tenants Organization, Mrs. Salowe-Kaye's commitment to social activism and public advocacy was formed.

For the last 35 years, Mrs. Salowe-Kaye has capably led New Jersey Citizen Action—NJCA—the Garden State's largest and oldest multi-issue nonprofit organization. As a champion for fairness and justice, she has brought to the forefront many of the quality-of-life issues that are most important to New Jersey's residents. From healthcare to housing, environmental protections to a living wage, Mrs. Salowe-Kaye has consistently marshalled the full force of her organization's 60,000 members to move the needle on issues and push our State forward.

Of her many crowning achievements, she has successfully leveraged the Federal Community Reinvestment Act to secure more than \$30 billion in commitments from local banks. These commitments have opened doors of opportunities for thousands of low-income families, women, and minorities who have been able to access financial tools including housing counseling, affordable mortgages, and more.

In addition to her public advocacy and leadership in civil society, Mrs. Salowe-Kaye has sat on too many councils, boards, and task forces to list. However, among other roles, she has proudly served as a trustee of the Teacher's Pension and Annuity Fund, a commissioner for New Jersey's Public Broadcasting Authority, and a member of the Federal Reserve Community Advisory Council during the Obama administration.

In 2012, I was honored to recognize her work by presenting her with a Trailblazer Award at my annual Women's History Month celebration. Since then, not only has she continued to demonstrate visionary leadership, genuine care, and selfless commitment, she has also grown the reach and influence of New Jersey Citizen Action. For this and for all she has done to distinguish herself as a passionate leader, I am honored to recognize her with these remarks which will live on forever in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Today, I join her loving husband of 47 years, Mr. Stewart Kaplowitz; her children Joanna and Zachary; and her three grandchildren in thanking Mrs. Phyllis Salowe-Kaye for her lifelong service as a community leader who has never stopped fighting for a better New Jersey for all.●

#### NICODEMUS, KANSAS, 145TH HOMECOMING EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this weekend, in the town of Nicodemus in

western Kansas, folks from all over will gather to celebrate and commemorate the history of this town. This year they will celebrate the 145th Homecoming Emancipation Celebration.

Nicodemus holds a unique place in American history. In 1877, newly freed slaves migrated West determined to create a community where freedom and equality could flourish. Out of the resolve of those early settlers emerged Nicodemus. Nicodemus was the first Black community west of the Mississippi River and is the only predominantly Black community west of the Mississippi that remains a living community today. Far from other towns or the railroad, life in Nicodemus wasn't easy, but the early settlers were determined to build a life for themselves—farms, homes, and a community that was their own.

The Homecoming Emancipation Celebration serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation, a proclamation that shattered the shackles of slavery and ignited the spark of hope and liberty across the Nation. Throughout the years, the Homecoming Emancipation Celebration has been a time of reflection, remembrance, and unity. Families gather to pay homage to their ancestors and cherish the sacrifices made by those who sought a new life and new opportunities.

The celebration this weekend is a time for grandparents to pass down stories and memories to the younger generations, ensuring that the legacy of Nicodemus lives on in the hearts and minds of all. I hope that this celebration is a chance to remember the history of Nicodemus and celebrate the men and women who bravely made the journey west to find a place of their own.

I hope anyone passing through western Kansas will take time to visit Nicodemus to learn the history of this brave little town on the plains of Kansas.●

#### RECOGNIZING THE STOCKTON LIONS CLUB

● Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today I come to the Senate floor to pay tribute to the Stockton Lions Club and recognize their contributions to the community. This organization has been a part of the community since the 1950s, and its presence will be missed.

Lions Club International is the world's largest service organization, with more than 1.42 million members and 47,000 clubs in over 200 countries. In Kansas, 216 clubs serve various community needs. The international focus of the Lions Club is helping the visually impaired or blind. This cause came from Helen Keller at the International Convention at Cedar Point, OH, in June of 1925. She challenged the Lions to be the "Knights of the Blind." From holding eyeglass drop-offs in the community, to paying for eye appointments and glasses, the Stockton Lions Club answered this challenge.

As a member of the Kansas Lions Club for almost 40 years, I have witnessed the hard work and dedication these members put forward to serve others. At its core, the Lions Club's mission is to empower communities through acts of service, and it has touched countless lives. Their willingness to devote their time, talents, and treasure to helping others is inspiring. Over the years, I have enjoyed attending Lions Clubs meetings in Stockton to visit with folks about the issues important to them. I will miss attending the Stockton Lions Club but want to take time to remember this community organization. The dedicated members of the club demonstrated that, together, they could make a difference in their community.

Whether by sponsoring the annual Free Watermelon Feed during the Rooks County Fair or taking students to the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, the Stockton Lions Club made an incredible impact. Thank you to the Stockton Lions Club members for bettering Kansas.●

#### RECOGNIZING WATCO COMPANIES

● **Mr. MORAN.** Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the creation of Watco Companies. Watco is a Pittsburg, KS, based transportation and logistics company that demonstrates the very best of Kansas work ethic.

Following the deregulation of the railroad industry in October 1980, founder Dick Webb saw a niche available to serve customers in the rail industry. With no line of credit, Dick moved his family to Louisiana, purchased a locomotive, and began an industrial railcar switching operation. The first customer in Louisiana was Boise Cascade, a paper manufacturer, which is still a Watco customer today.

A company that started with only one locomotive in 1983 has now grown to nearly 5,000 employees across North America and Australia and is known for its world-class management of short-line railroads, ports, and dependable transportation and supply-chain services. Dick Webb laid the foundation for the growth Watco has experienced today. He set the core values of the company—humility, integrity, and respect for the customer—which has translated in *Newsweek* magazine naming Watco as one of the top 100 most loved places to work in the U.S. in 2022 and worldwide in 2023.

Dedication to serving the customers' needs drives Watco's business model and, over the years, has contributed to Watco's expansion. In Kansas, there are more than 2,000 miles of short-line rail alone, and for the last 40 years, Watco has been an integral mover of Kansas agricultural commodities such as grain and feed products, industrial products such as chemicals and liquid petroleum gasses, cement, coal, steel, and plastics.

Kansas providers rely on rail transportation to move their products to

markets across the region. Without efficient and varied transportation options, a versatility innate to Watco, producers are at a significant disadvantage. Last June, a \$375 million soybean crushing facility opened in Cherryvale, KS, and the South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad, owned and operated by Watco, provides services to the facility, connecting it to the class 1 rail network.

I have been proud to support Watco in their applications to the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement—CRISI—Grant Program, not only because of their contributions to Kansas businesses, but also the larger impact to the Pittsburg community. Watco and the Webb family have made it a point to give back to local schools and universities, utilizing their platform to contribute graciously to the community in numerous philanthropic ways.

Companies like Watco exhibit the excellence of the Kansas workforce and a commitment to delivering quality service to their customers. I want to congratulate Watco on 40 years of excellence and reliability and look forward to 40 more years of delivering on their promises.●

#### FERNANDO VALENZUELA'S JERSEY RETIREMENT

**Mr. PADILLA.** Mr. President, I rise today as a proud, lifelong Los Angeles Dodgers fan to recognize the achievements and legacy of Fernando "El Toro" Valenzuela, whose jersey will soon be retired by the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Fernando Valenzuela stunned the baseball world, captured the hearts of millions of Californians, and inspired Little League baseball players, future Major League Baseball Hall of Famers, and Mexican Americans across the country to dream big.

The youngest of 12 children, Valenzuela was born and raised in the small town of Etchohuauquila, in Sonora, Mexico. His parents Avelino and Maria were poor farmers who worked the land with their children. Valenzuela learned to play baseball from his older brothers and started pitching professionally in Mexico at the age of 17. Discovered by legendary Dodgers scout Mike Brito, Valenzuela soon made his Major League debut at the age of 19. In 1980, his first season, he pitched in relief in 10 games and did not surrender a single earned run.

The 1981 season saw the cultural phenomenon of "Fernandomania," which brought one of the best stretches of pitching in Major League Baseball history. He was on the mound for the Dodgers as their opening day starting pitcher and proceeded to win his first eight starts—at that time, the longest such streak since World War II. He finished the season with 11 complete games, 8 shutouts, and a 2.48 ERA. His sensational pitching brought packed crowds to Dodger Stadium as he cap-

tured the hearts of Los Angeles' Mexican-American community, and brought record crowds to every stadium he pitched in across the country.

During the deciding game 5 of the 1981 National League Championship Series against the Expos, Valenzuela locked into a grueling pitching duel for over eight innings and helped the Dodgers win the National League pennant. In game 3 of the 1981 World Series, Valenzuela pitched a complete game against the Yankees and jumpstarted a four-game Dodgers winning streak on their way to winning the World Series title.

On a personal note, as a kid growing up playing Little League baseball in the San Fernando Valley, I remember watching Fernando pitch, his iconic wind-up with his leg sweeping up chest high, his quick glance toward the heavens, and suddenly, *El Toro* would deliver a devastating screwball.

Valenzuela would go on to pitch for the Dodgers for 11 seasons, play for several other MLB teams, and even pitch in the Mexican Pacific League when he was nearly 44 years old. He ended his career as a World Series Champion, a six-time All-Star, a two-time Silver Slugger winner, and a Gold Glove winner. He also became the first player—and remains the only player—ever to win the Rookie of the Year and Cy Young awards in the same season for his remarkable 1981 season. And today, he remains part of the Dodgers organization as the color commentator for the team's Spanish language television broadcast.

More than 40 years later, Fernandomania lives on. Valenzuela continues to bring immense joy and pride to the Mexican-American community in Los Angeles and around the country. I am proud that the Dodgers will be retiring Valenzuela's No. 34 jersey, and I am proud to recognize his many years of dedication to the Los Angeles community and for inspiring generations of Latinos to pursue their dreams and be champions in their own right.

So now, enshrined in Dodger Stadium alongside names like "Robinson," "Koufax," "Drysdale," "Hodges," and "Snider," finally, a new number will hang forever—34, for Valenzuela.

#### REMEMBERING EUGENE "GUS" NEWPORT

● **Mr. SANDERS.** Mr. President, I wish to commemorate the life of Gus Newport, a long-time champion for human rights and advocate for racial and economic justice, who passed away on June 17, 2023.

Gus will be remembered as a true progressive activist, having worked as the mayor of Berkeley, CA, as a member on the leadership committee of the National Council of Elders, the vice president from the U.S. to the World Peace Council serving on the United Nations Committee against Apartheid and the Committee on the Question of