

to host local elected leaders and local veterans service organization leaders together in an intimate discussion with the VA Secretary.

Throughout his time in my office, Brennan exemplified intelligence, diligence, compassion, and a joyful spirit of public service in all that he did. He was also lovingly supported by his wife Elizabeth, and his three children, Eva, Roman, and Maeve. They were integral supporters of his success, and I am equally grateful to them.

Following his time in my office, Brennan went on to work as a Congressional Budget Liaison for the United States Army, where he continued to make innumerable contributions to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join my wife, Vivian, and me, in extending our best wishes to Brennan and his family as he transitions to a new assignment and expressing profound thankfulness to him for his service to our great Nation.

**SUPPORTING H.R. 82, THE SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT OF 2023**

**HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2024*

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, on November 12th the House of Representatives took an important step by passing H.R. 82 and eliminating two harmful provisions that unfairly deny workers, their spouses, and their children the Social Security benefits they deserve. These provisions—the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) penalties—unfairly target Social Security benefits earned by public service workers, including teachers, police officers, firefighters, and hundreds of thousands of federal retirees.

WEP unfairly penalizes retirees who have spent careers in public service but who have also paid into Social Security at some point. More than 6 million public employees are or would be affected by WEP and around 800,000 Americans would have benefits reduced or eliminated by the GPO. Social Security keeps millions of seniors, children, disabled individuals and their families out of poverty, which is why it is crucial that Congress act to remedy these penalties. That is why I voted for H.R. 82.

That is also why I cosponsor Rep. JOHN LARSON's Social Security 2100 Act, which would repeal WEP and GPO while providing the appropriate pay-for measures needed to strengthen and preserve Social Security. The Social Security 2100 Act would improve Social Security's Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) so it reflects the inflation experienced by seniors, cuts taxes for middle-income beneficiaries among other important measures, and do so by ensuring millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share of Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes.

Conversely, H.R. 82 would fully repeal WEP and GPO without a pay-for. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this would move up the date of insolvency for the combined Social Security Trust Funds. Given that the President-elect and House Republicans are unwilling to support commonsense

solutions to strengthen Social Security, it is crucial that we work to prevent benefit cuts for Social Security recipients, especially our most vulnerable citizens.

Congress must achieve the goals of protecting American federal workers while also preserving the crucial benefits that all Americans are entitled to through Social Security. H.R. 82 would cost the Social Security Trust Fund \$200 billion over 10 years, and it is imperative that Congress act to fill in this gap.

I urge the Senate to address H.R. 82's pay-for shortcomings as this bill moves forward.

**FRIENDSHIP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2024*

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, Friendship United Methodist Church in Buena, New Jersey has done an outstanding job spreading the good news of Jesus for over 200 years. This extraordinary place of worship has been standing in the same place it was back in 1808, when it became one of the first Methodist Episcopal churches in the area. In the early days of South Jersey and the United States, there were not many places to worship, but the dedicated followers of Jesus Christ made sure that the people of Buena, New Jersey had a place to fellowship with their Lord. The church has endured hardships through the years and even had to close its doors at one point, but with the commitment from the ancestors of some of its original members, the house of God once again reopened in 2010 and has stood strong ever since. To this day, it is the oldest known church structure that is still in use by its congregation, and it looks forward to many more years of bringing people close to God and remembering the history- of Christianity in South Jersey.

God bless Friendship United Methodist Church and God bless the United States of America.

**HONORING CARLOS LEON'S CAREER IN SERVICE**

**HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2024*

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor El Paso County Commissioner, Carlos Leon, a lifelong El Pasoan, who has dedicated his career to serving El Paso, Texas for over four decades.

Commissioner Leon began his career in 1974 with the El Paso Police Department, where he served for three decades. As a captain, he championed community policing, the law enforcement policy of fostering strong relationships between law enforcement and residents that builds trust and creates safer neighborhoods. In 1999, he was appointed Chief of Police, leading El Paso to its first national recognition as the safest city in America.

Commissioner Leon's dedication continued with his election as County Commissioner for

Precinct 1, where he has served three terms. I had the privilege of working with Commissioner Leon on the Commissioners' Court, witnessing firsthand his passion for a responsive, efficient government. He was instrumental in creating a County Administration Office to streamline and professionalize county operations, expanding healthcare access through University Medical Center clinics, and championing a \$15 minimum wage for all County employees.

It is my privilege to honor Commissioner Carlos Leon for his decades of dedicated service to the citizens of El Paso County. His leadership in public safety, infrastructure, access to healthcare, and economic equity has left a lasting impact on our community. I extend my heartfelt gratitude for his years of service and wish him and his beloved family, the very best in his well-deserved retirement.

**CONGRATULATING THE ST. ELIZABETH HORNETS, THE MISSOURI CLASS 1 SOFTBALL STATE CHAMPIONS**

**HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2024*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the St. Elizabeth Hornets softball team for their remarkable achievement of capturing the Class 1 state championship. Their commanding victory over Gallatin in the title game, with a final score of 11-1, is a testament to their hard work and extraordinary talent.

Under Coach Oligschlaeger's leadership, the Hornets showcased consistency and greatness by going 30-2. What makes winning 30 games even more impressive is that they played most of their games against schools in larger classifications. When postseason play began, the dominance continued. They astonishingly outscored their opponents 78-7.

This championship adds to the legacy of the St. Elizabeth softball program, marking the fifth in its history. The continued success of this program is an excellent example of what happens when a community comes together to embrace and support its school.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to St. Elizabeth's players, coaches, staff, and fans. The shared effort of hard work, determination, and perseverance has brought honor to the school, town, and Mid-Missouri region. This St. Elizabeth softball team season shows what can be achieved when a community comes together to support a common goal.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 14, 2024*

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes on November 13, 2024. Had I been present, I would have voted: NAY on Roll Call No. 459, and NAY on Roll Call No. 460.

CONGRATULATING RICHIE  
DEMARIA, SR.

**HON. JEFFERSON VAN DREW**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Richard DeMaria on having May 20, 2024, officially being named “Richard DeMaria Day” in the Borough of Buena because of the incredible contributions he has given to the area. Richie has owned and operated the Landisville Liquor Store since 1957 and has made it an integral part of the Buena Borough by providing great service to the community as well as initiating and maintaining its economy. The Landisville Liquor Store has been a model for businesses and has set the standard for customer service, quality, and professionalism throughout the years. Leading up to starting the Landisville Liquor Store, he worked in his grandpop’s feed store and bar, and he was a very likeable young man playing three sports in high school and having many friends. After graduation, he joined the Navy and sailed around the world several times before coming back to Buena, buying the bar from his grandpop on credit and paying it off creating what we have today as the Landisville Liquor Store. Richie has risen above many challenges in his life to not only become a successful businessman, but also an outstanding role model family and local community. I thank Richie, for all he has done for South Jersey and congratulate him on a well-deserved new holiday.

God bless Richard DeMaria and God bless the United States of America.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERIC  
PAULSEN

**HON. STEVE SCALISE**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Eric Paulsen and his many contributions to our community in New Orleans and the state of Louisiana.

Eric tragically lost his battle with cancer on October 26, 2024.

For five decades, Eric kept our community informed as a local news legend, including forty years as a morning news anchor and reporter for WWL TV in New Orleans, making him one of our nation’s longest-tenured broadcasters.

For many people in Southeast Louisiana, turning to Channel 4 to hear the morning news from Eric was a part of their daily routine. For nearly half a century, Eric covered some of our region’s best and worst moments; from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and other major storms to capturing the culture of New Orleans at Jazz Fest, he was there for Louisiana families through it all. His love and passion for the New Orleans food and music scene inspired many of his stories and earned him countless friendships across the City.

Earlier this year, Eric earned the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Press Club of New Orleans and was recognized by the New Orleans City Council for his out-

standing journalism and commitment to the city and surrounding regions.

In addition to his broadcasting excellence, Eric was also a fixture at so many charitable events around the city and should serve as an inspiration to all of us to strive to give back to this community that has given us so much.

Not only was Eric a true friend, but his professionalism mixed with witty humor and a deep love of the city of New Orleans made him one of a kind who will be irreplaceable.

Eric Paulsen was loved by all who met him and will be sadly missed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COURT  
IMPROVEMENT EQUITY ACT

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO  
SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2024

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Court Improvement Equity Act which authorizes grants to improve child welfare services in Guam, American Samoa, and my district, the Northern Mariana Islands.

As it stands, courts located in the Pacific territories are the only entities that do not receive support from the Court Improvement Program (CIP) under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. In all other territories and states, the CIP provides a grant to the highest court of appeal to assess and improve the handling of foster care and adoption proceedings.

Every child, regardless of where they grow up in our country, has the right to a safe, secure, and nurturing family. My bill would enshrine this right by extending the same base grant currently available everywhere else to our islands.

The gentleman from Guam, Mr. MOYLAN, is an original cosponsor of the bill. I urge my colleagues to support this vital bipartisan legislation.

STOP TERROR-FINANCING AND  
TAX PENALTIES ON AMERICAN  
HOSTAGES ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 9495, the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act.

This legislation would grant the Secretary of the Treasury the unilateral authority to suspend the tax-exempt status of any organization deemed “terrorist supporting” without due process or evidence. U.S. law already prohibits nonprofits from providing material support to terrorists. Additionally, I am deeply concerned about how this legislation could provide President-elect Trump’s incoming administration with unchecked power to cause irreparable damage to any nonprofit he deems a threat to his own political agenda. This could be disastrous for nonprofits across the country, including those doing important work in the Fourth District like Springboard for the Arts,

the Playwrights’ Center, and the Center for Victims of Torture. More than 120 civil society groups—including the ACLU, the American Federation of Teachers, the NAACP, and the League of Conservation Voters—signed a letter opposing this bill due to the potential for abuse. I include in the RECORD this letter. I stand with them, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

SEPTEMBER 20, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND LEADER JEFFRIES: We write to express our deep concerns with H.R. 9495, the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act. Specifically, this bill includes the text of H.R. 6408, legislation we strongly oppose as it raises significant constitutional concerns. Because H.R. 6408 vests vast unilateral discretion in the Secretary of Treasury, it creates a high risk of politicized and discriminatory enforcement. The executive branch already has extensive authority to prohibit transactions with individuals and entities it deems connected to terrorism and nonprofit organizations are already prohibited from providing material support to terrorist organizations. In fact, it would be a federal crime for them to do so.

Moreover, we do not oppose the provisions in H.R. 9495 that relate to preventing the IRS from imposing fines and penalties on hostages while they are held abroad. Indeed, these provisions have already passed the Senate on their own, and if the House of Representatives were to pass a version of this bill that did not include the text of H.R. 6408, it could be sent immediately to the President for his signature.

Without any evidence as to the need for this legislation, H.R. 6408 authorizes broad and easily abused new powers for the executive branch. It grants the Secretary of the Treasury virtually unfettered discretion to designate a U.S. nonprofit as a “terrorist supporting organization” and to strip it of its tax-exempt status if the Secretary finds that the nonprofit has provided material support to a terrorist group, even if the “support” is not intentional or connected to actual violence.

While the sponsors of this legislation have stated that it is needed to avoid what they refer to as “time-consuming bureaucratic process” under current law, what the bill sponsors are actually seeking to avoid is fundamental due process. If this bill were to become law, the Secretary of Treasury could strip a US nonprofit of its tax-exempt status without providing the nonprofit a meaningful opportunity to defend itself before a neutral decisionmaker. The legislation further does not require disclosure of all the reasons for such a decision or the evidence relied upon to support it. Nor would the government be required to provide any evidence in its possession that might undermine its decision, leaving an accused nonprofit entirely in the dark about what conduct the government believes qualifies as material support.

The potential for abuse under H.R. 6408 is immense as the executive branch would be handed a tool it could use to curb free speech, censor nonprofit media outlets, target political opponents, and punish disfavored groups across the political spectrum. Moreover, the addition of this authority to the tax code would allow the IRS to explicitly target and harass domestic nonprofits using its investigative authority. It is also not hard to imagine a future administration using this power in far broader circumstances that have nothing to do with the