

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DR. JENNIFER
OLSEN

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Jennifer Olsen for her many years of outstanding service promoting the health and wellbeing of caregivers in Georgia and across the Nation. As 2024 comes to a close, Dr. Olsen will retire as Chief Executive Officer of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers (RCI) after six years of impactful service.

Under the leadership of Dr. Olsen, RCI, which is based at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia, has called for a robust public health strategy to support our Nation's caregivers at all levels of government. Following in the footsteps of our former first lady and RCI's late founder Mrs. Rosalynn Carter, Dr. Olsen led the call to place caregivers at the heart of our Nation's public health strategy. By shedding light on the stories and everyday struggles of caregivers and their families, Dr. Olsen also championed the creation of an Office of Caregiver Health in the federal government—an initiative I am pleased to support. Year-on-year, Dr. Olsen made tremendous strides in her efforts to improve working conditions for caregivers in every state in the Nation.

Prior to joining RCI in 2018, Dr. Olsen managed the Ending Pandemics in Our Lifetime initiative at the Skoll Global Threats Fund; co-created the internationally utilized Epihack™ process; and served as Fusion Division Director in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Olsen also directed disease surveillance activities for G-8 and G-20 summits, State of the Union Addresses, the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, and Democratic and Republican National Conventions. In addition, she advised on the development of a Federal Interagency Information Collection Plan for the 2009 H1N1 Influenza outbreak and served with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Dr. Olsen has accomplished so much throughout her life and career, but none of it would have been possible without the Grace of God and the love and support of her family.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said the purpose of life "is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." Dr. Olsen has lived a life well spent, serving those who care for others. Her unwavering service has transformed RCI, enabling it to successfully carry on Rosalynn Carter's legacy on behalf of family caregivers nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian; and me, along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District, in recognizing Dr. Jennifer Olsen's extraordinary career of service to

America's caregivers. May God continue to bless her and her family as she moves to the next chapter of her remarkable life.

TRIBUTE TO LESA SOBEK

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Lesa Sobek, who is stepping down from the Menifee City Council after many years of serving in that role. Lesa has been a true leader in Menifee for decades and served as an effective advocate for her community.

Along with her husband, Jim, and three children, Lesa has been a resident of Menifee, California, for more than 30 years. Lesa spent many years working for the Menifee Union School District in various roles, where she helped develop a literacy program known as GREAT (Grandparents, Reading, Enriching, and Tutoring). Lesa successfully advocated for the establishment of the Menifee Military Banner Program, which honors the community's veterans and military service members from past to present.

After serving as on the Planning Commission, Lesa was elected to serve on the Menifee City Council in 2015. She was later re-elected to serve as the Council Member representing District 3 in 2016 and again in 2020. On the Council, Lesa worked with her colleagues and city staff to support residents and local businesses. She has championed youth programs, senior citizens, and increased awareness about domestic violence and backed many efforts for Menifee's local shelter.

Lesa clearly possesses a passionate belief in public service and a dedication to the community she has served so faithfully. I know I speak on behalf of all residents in expressing my heartfelt thanks and praise for Lesa's significant contributions to Menifee. I wish Lesa and her family the very best in the years to come.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHONTEL M. BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in the House of Representatives, the Congressional Black Caucus and people across the country in extending my gratitude, appreciation, and congratulations to the great Congresswoman BARBARA LEE as she prepares to leave the House of Representatives.

As a friend, mentor, and collaborator to so many of us, Congresswoman LEE will be truly

missed in the House of Representatives. However, Congresswoman LEE's legacy and impact will long endure—not just in these halls, but in the lives of the people that she fought for.

I am honored to have served alongside Congresswoman LEE. Her incredible life and career connects us to so many landmark moments and shining heroes of the fight for civil rights and justice, including Shirley Chisholm, John Lewis, and Ronald Dellums.

Congresswoman LEE championed causes that were right before they were popular, causes that were difficult before they were easy, and causes that were marginalized before they were mainstream.

As we face the inauguration of a new president, there will be calls for Democrats to capitulate on our principles. However, Congresswoman LEE showed us time and time again that we should always listen to our constituents, vigorously advance our values, and never stop standing up for liberty and justice for all. We endure by championing what is enduring.

Mr. Speaker, we need more Barbara Lees in this institution. As we celebrate her legacy, may we all draw upon her courage, compassion, and foresight, and her unstinting defense of the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.

I thank Congresswoman LEE for all that she has done for our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, during the week of September 9th to September 12th, I was unable to travel to Washington, D.C. due to an illness. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call No. 401—YEA; Roll Call No. 402—YEA; Roll Call No. 403—NAY; Roll Call No. 404—NAY; Roll Call No. 405—YEA; Roll Call No. 406—YEA; Roll Call No. 407—YEA; Roll Call No. 408—NAY; Roll Call No. 409—YEA; Roll Call No. 410—YEA; Roll Call No. 411—NAY; Roll Call No. 412—YEA; Roll Call No. 413—NAY; Roll Call No. 414—YEA; Roll Call No. 415—NAY; Roll Call No. 416—YEA; and Roll Call No. 417—NAY.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF VAN A. HURST

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank my constituent, Van A. Hurst of Kent, Washington, for his advocacy on an important issue that will impact thousands of transportation workers. This

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

week, the House of Representatives will consider the Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act.

This legislation addresses a long-standing issue affecting transportation workers like truck drivers, pipeline operators, longshoremen, and warehouse managers. These workers are often required to obtain multiple TSA-managed credentials, each with different expiration dates, fees, and redundant background checks. Not only is this process duplicative and time-consuming, but workers also bear the financial burden of maintaining these credentials, preventing them from fully participating in the workforce.

The Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act cuts through red tape by allowing workers to apply existing valid background checks to multiple credentialing programs. This will significantly reduce costs and administrative hassle for these essential workers.

Mr. Hurst, a former truck driver and Teamster, met with my office to share his expertise and firsthand experience with this issue. His advocacy played a key role in shaping this bipartisan, commonsense legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as the House considers this critical legislation, I want to thank Mr. Hurst again for his leadership on this matter. It is an honor representing him in Congress, and I am proud that this legislation has passed the Senate and is on its way to becoming law, bringing much-needed relief to our Nation's transportation workers.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JUDGE LAURINE BLAKE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Laurine J. "Lauri" Blake of Bonham, Texas. Judge Blake has faithfully dedicated herself to serving and protecting our community.

Judge Blake received her bachelor's degree in criminal justice studies from the University of North Dakota in 1987. She began her distinguished public service career as a police officer for the City of Dallas after graduating at the top of her police academy class. In 1993, Judge Blake earned her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University School of Law and was selected to serve as the Assistant Criminal District Attorney for Collin County. Over the next eleven years, she rose up the ranks to become the First Assistant District Attorney in Grayson County and successfully helped prosecute numerous criminals to keep our communities safe.

In 2004, Judge Blake was elected as District Judge for the 336th Judicial District Court in Fannin County, making history as the first female judge elected to this district court. Under her leadership, she established a rehabilitation program for parolees struggling with addiction and worked closely with Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates to protect child welfare. For her outstanding work, she received the Better Leader Award from the Texoma Council of Governments and the Texas CASA Judicial Innovation and Leadership Award. I am pleased to recognize Judge Blake today

for the positive impact she has made on our community.

I have requested the United States flag to be flown over our Nation's Capitol in recognition of Judge Blake's exceptional service to the people of North Texas. I thank her for all she has done.

CELEBRATING THE SERVICE OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL C. BURGESS

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, it's a privilege to recognize my colleague and dear friend, Congressman MICHAEL BURGESS. For over 20 years, Dr. BURGESS has served with dedication, determination and an unbreakable commitment to his constituents, Texas, and to our great nation.

When MICHAEL came to Congress, he brought with him a physician's expertise, a sharp intellect, and a deep sense of duty. But beyond those skills, he brought something rare in this chamber: humility and grace. Whether working on complex healthcare policies, immigration issues or standing up for his district, MICHAEL has always been a steady hand and a thoughtful voice.

I've seen MICHAEL's leadership firsthand, especially when he stepped up to chair the powerful Rules Committee. In his first act as the Rules Committee chairman, he achieved something remarkable—passing the most bipartisan rule in congressional history. That's pretty rare. In fact, I think it may be the first and only time.

But MICHAEL's impact goes beyond the Rules Committee and legislative wins. His work with families, especially those facing life's hardest battles, speaks volumes about his character.

MICHAEL worked with me and joined the Congressional Childhood Cancer Caucus that I chair, to help pursue legislation that would bring new and innovative care to help eradicate childhood cancer. He introduced me to Sadie Keller, a Childhood Cancer survivor and my star lobbyist. Together, we wrote a book called *Better Angels*, detailing our journey together. MICHAEL helped me give a voice to fighters like Sadie, who never had a voice in Congress. As a physician, he knew the importance of fighting for these children. His work with the Childhood Cancer Caucus has brought hope to so many, and that's a legacy we will never forget.

MICHAEL's intellect, judgment, and his demeanor will be missed. He has shown us what it means to serve with integrity and dedication.

I thank him for his service, his friendship, and his unwavering commitment to the House of Representatives, Texas, and the United States.

HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, for the last eight years, I've had the privilege and honor to serve the people of Puerto Rico as their sole Member of Congress.

During this time, we faced significant challenges. In early September 2017, a few months into my first term, Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Irma, followed two weeks later by Hurricane Maria—the strongest hurricane to make landfall on the Island in over 80 years—which completely devastated our communities, destroyed our infrastructure, and produced the largest power blackout in U.S. history.

In late 2019, Puerto Rico's southern region began experiencing a seismic sequence that ended with a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on January 7th, 2020. This further damaged public and private infrastructure and left residents of the area in a constant state of fear and uncertainty.

And in 2020, like the rest of the world, we were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These were all formidable challenges for Puerto Rico that needed to be addressed with a strong sense of urgency, and we met them head-on.

Working alongside my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we secured historic levels of federal funding to assist Puerto Rico's recovery process. These include nearly \$73.5 billion in hurricane-relief funding, \$1.6 billion to address the impact of the earthquakes, and close to \$44.1 billion in pandemic relief allocations.

As we worked to respond to these emergencies, we also had to focus on other competing but equally important priorities. Chief among them was addressing the Medicaid funding gap that provides health care coverage for 1.5 million residents in Puerto Rico.

I'm proud that during my time in Congress we were able to secure \$29.5 billion to stabilize Puerto Rico's Medicaid program while increasing the federal matching rate, more recently from 55 to 76 percent.

I'm also proud that we were able to address longstanding disparities under federal programs to help combat poverty and grow the economy. For example, we were able to include Puerto Rico in the Child Tax Credit for families with one or two children, who did not previously qualify, and secured a \$600 million annual federal funding allocation to supplement the Island's local Earned Income Tax Credit.

I'm also pleased to have secured \$33.7 million in Community Project Funding for 29 local projects across Puerto Rico. And as a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I supported the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, under which Puerto Rico is expected to receive at least \$2.2 billion over five years.

I've also introduced legislation to provide the Island equal treatment under critical programs like SNAP, Medicaid and Medicare, SSI, and EITC.

I've led efforts to resolve our political status dilemma and end our territorial status. This is