

Navalny in a Siberian gulag, which underscores the Putin oppression of Russian citizens.

During the course of the sessions, the delegation was grateful to host and meet with: President Pia Kauma of Finland, Secretary General Roberto Montella, and Ukrainian Head of Delegation Mykyta Poturaiev.

It was appreciated to meet with Ambassador Peter Burian, former Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the United States for Slovakia, and the successful host of the Fall Assembly in Yerevan, Parliamentarian Sargis Khandanyan of Armenia.

I was grateful to moderate a side event titled "Enforcing the Sanctions Against Russia" co-sponsored by the Norwegian and Ukrainian delegations. The panel featured Erlend B. Bjoertvedt, sanctions expert Corisk consultancy; Bill Browder, Head of the Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign; and Gunnar M. Ekelove-Slydal, Executive Director of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

Our delegation, joined by Congressman BRAD SCHNEIDER, held a bilateral meeting with members of the Israeli Knesset MK Ram Ben Barak (Yesh Atid Party), MK Hanoch Dov Milwidsky (Likud Party), and Israeli Permanent Representative to the OSCE David Roet.

We also held a bilateral meeting with the Romanian delegation, including Romanian Head of Delegation Dan Barna, MP Hajdu Gabor, MP Christine Thellmann, and Romanian Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna Stelian Stoian.

As we look back on this important and historic trip, I want to add my special thanks to the educated OSCE staff that helped make it possible, including Janice Helwig, Everett Price, Marcus Micheli, Jennifer McCuiston, Paul Massaro, Rachel Bauman, Mike Geffroy, Bakhti Nishanov, and Steven Schrage.

Especially important is the incredible work and service of the excellent team of Marines who led the complex logistics of the trip, particularly MGySgt Wesley Helms, GySgt Catalina Delgado, and 2nd Lt Lauren Anderson.

They and, and all of the individuals above, helped bring critical attention and energy to the historic challenges we face as we stand against dictators and the rule of gun, and for democracy and the rule of law, in Europe and the wider world.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN MICHIGAN'S 11TH DISTRICT

HON. HALEY M. STEVENS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the wisdom of an inspiring figure, Dr. Eddie Connor, as we conclude 2024 Black History Month. Dr. Connor delivered remarks in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January, and his words inspire me as we continue the important work to create a more equitable society.

It is an honor to learn from so many influential leaders about this important history. From the Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage in Alabama to local leaders in Michigan's 11th District, I am moved by the stories and insight

that has been shared with me. Dr. Connor is one of those figures that I am proud to highlight. He is a 16-time best-selling author, international speaker, survivor of stage four cancer, and founder of the mentoring program Boys 2 Books.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the tapestry of communities in Oakland County that make up Michigan's 11th District. It was a pleasure to celebrate Black History Month with so many remarkable people, and it is my honor to amplify the powerful remarks from Dr. Connor as we close Black History Month 2024 and continue our work throughout the remainder of the year.

(By Dr. Eddie Connor)

MLK Jr. Day Remarks

The question that we must ask ourselves today at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Celebration is "What can I do to make the world a better place?" Not just presently but for future generations. There indeed is a great work for all of us to do. We must labor and be faithful to be fruitful in order to reap a plentiful harvest.

He expressed that life's most persistent and urgent question must be. "What are you doing for others?" Dr. King's ultimate societal goal was the achievement of structuring a nonviolent beloved community that would embrace those of various ethnicities and backgrounds to all be seated at the table of brotherhood.

Dr. King declared "Poverty is the bride of crime." We look at the disease of violence and mass incarceration but we must unmask it to analyze societal symptoms. The symptoms are poverty, lack of education, dilapidation of communities, unseemly blight, gentrification, and redlining are the symptoms that create the disease and dis-ease that we see.

His decision to speak out against the tyranny of the Vietnam War made him a marked man more than ever before. Dr. King spoke about the triple evils of racism, militarism, and materialism seeking to redistribute the wealth in the Black community through group economics.

When Dr. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee, his popularity was at its lowest and the threats on his life were at its highest. His name was ran through the streets and now we name the streets after him.

Dr. King was not killed because he had a dream. He was killed because he spoke out about the nightmare in these yet to be United States of America. He became the moral conscience of America. He challenged our nation and even the world in a greater context, to "Learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." He proclaimed "The true measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of crisis, challenge, and controversy."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., challenged us despite race, creed, or color to come together, stay together and work together. Simply because coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress but working together is success.

HONORING TOM SKILLING

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate one of the most renowned

and beloved figures in Chicago, meteorologist Tom Skilling. Tom, a 9th Congressional District resident, has worked for 45 years on WGN-TV, enthusiastically and accurately providing weather forecasts to Chicagoland. His lifelong passion for weather and his connection with his audience has earned him a place in the hearts and history of this city and beyond. I am proud and honored to call him a friend. As he embarks on his well-deserved retirement and starts his next chapter, we offer our sincerest gratitude for bringing his sunshine to our TV screens for decades.

I commend Tom Skilling for his unrelenting and contagious dedication to the weather. As a boy growing up on the East Coast, he studied weather maps purchased with his allowance. Tom moved to Aurora, Illinois in 7th grade and brought with him a passion for meteorology so strong he had to share it with the world. At only 14 years old, Tom gave the forecast on the local radio station WKKD before attending class at West Aurora High School.

Upon completing his studies in meteorology and journalism at the University of Wisconsin, Tom embarked on a career that made him a Chicago area legend. Joining the team at WGN-TV, Tom accomplished what no other did before him—he didn't just say what the weather was, he told us why it was happening. Bringing a level of accessibility and authenticity like no other, Tom connected with viewers' hearts and minds.

Tom's last day on the air brought a 70-degree day in February, followed by rain and strong winds and a steep drop in temperatures. Tom speaks with tremendous knowledge and gravitas about climate change science, and the dangers of not acting to protect our planet. He has travelled across the country, including to Washington, to talk about "climate disruption," and led a special series on WGN called Forecast—A Fragile Climate. He speaks about climate change frequently. I know first hand, since we participated together in a climate change forum several years ago.

He has and earned honorary doctorates at universities and colleges, but I'm sure none of those mean as much to Tom as the love and admiration of the millions of viewers who have trusted him to tell them about their weather and their environment for the last 45 years.

As his next chapter arrives Tom's lifetime love for weather persists. We are grateful for Tom's dedication and contribution to this city, and he will always be revered as Chicago's weatherman.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BARBARA ANN GUARDINO

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Barbara Ann Guardino who died on January 29, 2024, at the age of 90. Barbara was born in Lawton, Oklahoma to Everett and Velta Server on January 11, 1934, and was one of four children.

Barbara and her family moved to San Jose, California when she was 13 years old. She graduated from James Lick High School where she met Richard Venture Guardino.

They were married at Saint Patrick's Church in San Jose in 1954.

Barbara and Richard had four dearly loved sons, William Richard, Michael Joseph; Mark Anthony, and Carl Thomas. She also loved her daughters-in-law: Janet, Patti, Chris, and Leslee, and her wonderful grandchildren: Natalie (Danny), Nancy (Tim), Billie (Carrie), Jessica, Siena, Jake, Chris (Ashley), and David. She adored her four great-grandchildren: Taylor, Teagan, Naomi, and Geo, and she was very fond of her dog Mi Amigo.

Barbara Guardino will be fondly remembered by all those who were privileged to know her for her love, her kindness, and her dedication to family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the memory of Barbara Guardino, an extraordinary American, and in extending our most sincere condolences to her large and loving family.

COMMEMORATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2024

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as this year's Black History Month ends, I rise today to honor two District of Columbia residents who have made tremendous contributions to civil rights, Walter Fauntroy and Robin Williams.

Walter Fauntroy served as a key organizer alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., helping to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches of 1965. Walter was also a noted lobbyist for civil rights, where he played a pivotal role in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Walter's efforts during this critical period were key to ushering in a new era of progress and possibility for all Americans.

Walter was also the second Delegate to the House of Representatives from the District of Columbia, a position he held for almost 20 years. During his tenure in Congress, Walter was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus and a champion for D.C. home rule.

Robin Williams is an associate director at the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) and a member of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP.

Robin joined UFCW as an employee at the Georgetown Safeway in 1986 and was elected International Vice President in 2015. As a labor organizer, Robin was a lead coordinator for the "Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride," which brought together tens of thousands of immigrant workers and immigrant rights activists for a tour throughout the United States to demand respect for immigrant workers' rights. Robin also serves as an Executive Vice President of the UFCW Minority Coalition and is a trustee on the board of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Robin is also a noted community activist. Some of Robin's local contributions include developing the D.C. Workers' Rights Board and D.C. Jobs With Justice. Robin has been recognized by the AFL-CIO Washington Metropolitan Central Labor Council for her impact on the National Capital Region.

Again, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Walter Fauntroy and Robin Williams.

RECOGNIZING MR. GLEN STEPHENS

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Glen Stephens for his dedicated service to the Kern County community and to congratulate him on his well-earned retirement from the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District. Mr. Glen Stephens' career in air quality control and passion for public health began more than thirty years ago when he became an Air Quality Engineer for the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District. In 1992, he joined the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and two years later, returned to work for Eastern Kern County. In 2012, Mr. Stephens was appointed to serve as Air Pollution Control Officer by the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District Board. During his tenure as Air Pollution Control Officer, Mr. Stephens has worked to expand the Tehachapi field office to solve staff members and the District's Board of Directors, deployed additional air monitors throughout Kern County to improve air quality, and advocated for cost-of-living wage increases for his staff. Mr. Stephens has also used his expertise to help numerous solar projects navigate the rulemaking and permitting processes. Throughout his career, Mr. Stephens has been steadfast in his commitment to promoting clean air for all residents of the community. He has used his decades of experience to support rural communities and work with local stakeholders to address complex air quality issues and find common sense solutions. He has also strived to engage community members on the importance of air quality and preserving the character of rural communities across the Valley. His dedication to his colleagues, his work, and his community is a true testament to his character. I know that his service to our Central Valley community will have a lasting impact for generations to come. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Mr. Glen Stephens for his decades of service to the Central Valley and wishing him a happy and well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE 63RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. PEACE CORPS

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate 63 years of the United States Peace Corps' work in promoting world peace and friendship among nations. President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps as the United States' first global volunteer initiative on March 1, 1961. Since then, the Peace Corps has sent more than 241,000 Volunteers to serve communities in 143 countries. These committed Americans have formed enduring

bonds of friendship across cultures and championed the best of our country's values abroad.

The founding Director of the Peace Corps, Sargent R. Shriver, observed that "Peace requires the simple but powerful recognition that what we have in common as human beings is more important and crucial than what divides us." Peace Corps Volunteers have performed immensely valuable and meaningful work to advance the vision of person-to-person peace-building by living and working in communities abroad. Over the past 63 years, Volunteers have learned the languages of their host countries to advance development work in public health, education, agriculture, youth organizing and community economics. Today, the Peace Corps' mission is in the capable hands of my constituent, Director Carol Spahn, who is herself a former Volunteer. This week, I am honored to celebrate her work as my Eighth District Local Hero to showcase the importance of her leadership of one of our country's most important diplomatic and service programs.

I am proud of the generations of compassionate and courageous Volunteers who have committed themselves to two or more years of service in a land previously unknown to them. Among their ranks are many of my constituents from Maryland's beautiful Eighth Congressional District. This year, my district has sent more Peace Corps Volunteers to serve abroad than any other congressional district in the country. It is my surpassing honor to represent the many individuals who are choosing to live, serve and learn in over 20 countries as Volunteers.

When they return to the United States, Peace Corps Volunteers bring their new vision home. After immersing themselves in the culture of their host communities, Volunteers continue to enrich our communities with the friendships they built during their time abroad. They bring not only their memories but new skills in languages, cross-cultural understanding and subject matter expertise. Many Volunteers continue to serve our country through other forms of public service.

As we honor the 63rd anniversary of the Peace Corps, I am grateful to the Volunteers and to the dedicated civil servants, led by Director Spahn, who make their work possible.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICENTE GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 1, 2024

Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes as I was accompanying President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., to my district—the 34th Congressional District of Texas. Due to my absence, I was not present to vote on Roll Call No. 57, Roll Call No. 58, and Roll Call No. 59.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 58. I stand firm against my stance on government shutdowns as they have adverse impacts on every part of the country, national economy, and national security.

Likewise, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 59. It is crucial that funding for the