

community as an Associate Director and then Resource Development Director at the UWEPC. In 2003, she was appointed the President and Chief Executive Officer, marking the beginning of a transformative era for the organization.

Under Ms. Zuloaga's leadership, the UWEPC not only faced challenges head-on but also thrived. The generous donation from philanthropist Mackenzie Scott in 2020 stands as a testament to the organization's impact and the trust placed in Ms. Zuloaga's stewardship. Her unwavering leadership during difficult times, including the response to the August 3, 2019 tragedy, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, underscores her commitment to community resilience.

Ms. Zuloaga's involvement in various non-profit initiatives, state boards, and community events further highlights her dedication to the well-being of El Paso. Her accolades, including being honored as one of six Women of Impact by El Paso Inc. in 2019, receiving the Outstanding Child Advocate—West Texas award from Children at Risk in 2021, and being nominated for El Paso Inc.'s 2023 El Pasoan of the Year, are a testament to her lasting impact to our community.

Today, it is my privilege to honor Ms. Deborah A. Zuloaga for her exemplary service, leadership, and dedication to our community, and wish her and her family the best upon her retirement.

KALEIGH MELINGER

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kaleigh Melinger for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Kaleigh has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Kaleigh, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Kaleigh's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Kaleigh Melinger on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

REMEMBERING SERGEANT JUAN
ERIC CANTU

HON. GREGORY F. MURPHY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an incredible person, honorable soldier, and remarkable community member, the late Sergeant Juan "Eric" Cantu. Sergeant Cantu honorably served our Nation in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. A native of Lenoir County, graduating in 1964 and immediately enlisting in the Army. After working in Illinois for a few years, he returned home to Kingston,

earning his industrial maintenance degree from Lenoir Community College in 1986. He served as the Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars, President of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 892, and a founding member of AmVets Post 1111.

Mr. Cantu is most known for founding the G.I. Joe Living Military History Museum, displaying memorabilia, uniforms, weapons, and photos from all major conflicts starting with the Revolutionary War. More than just a museum; it is a place of solace where veterans freely share their experiences and heal their wounds. Thanks to him, many veterans' lives have been saved due to the community and camaraderie fostered at the museum.

According to those who knew him the best, they cherished his work ethic, optimism, and community involvement. I thank them for joining me in celebrating the life of this wonderful Veteran. I wish Mr. Cantu's family the best in the future and hope that Mr. Cantu's creation, the G.I. Joe Living Military History Museum, can continue to serve those who gave it all.

HOW ILLINOIS CAN USE SUBCRITICAL NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO DEAL WITH NUCLEAR SPENT FUEL

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, on December 8th, Governor Pritzker signed into law a measure that will allow new small modular reactor (SMR) technology to proceed in Illinois. A moratorium on new construction has been in place since 1987. Illinois and 15 other states imposed bans primarily because, even with Congressional authorization and funding, the proposed permanent storage repository at Yucca Flats Nevada to this day has not received a single pound of spent nuclear fuel (SNF).

The estimated 87,000 metric tons of commercial SNF has been stored temporarily in holding ponds and dry casks primarily at the sites of U.S. nuclear power plants, both currently operating and shut down. The storage and security costs have been imposed on rate payers.

The law, which takes effect next June 1st, authorizes a state regulatory structure for SMRs and limits them to 300 MWe, or from a fourth to a third the power of the state's six operating reactors.

I have recently been paying special attention to subcritical advanced nuclear technology, which can consume the remaining energy in the SNF. The approach is based on pioneering molten salt research done at Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL) in the 1960s. It takes advantage of the large number of neutrons that can be produced by superconducting linear accelerators like the one brought online at the ORNL Spallation Neutron Source in the years since 2010.

Mr. Speaker, Illinois has been first in the nuclear age, dating from the first nuclear reactor in the basement of Professor Fermi's lab at the University of Chicago in the fall of 1942. The first commercial nuclear power plant was built in 1957. Today, more than half of Illinois' power generated comes from nuclear energy.

That is the most of any state. We have more SNF stored temporarily here than any state, more than 11,000 metric tons. We have even proposed constructing permanent storage sites, but without success.

Again, we can lead the nation and the world into the next generation of clean, safe, affordable power.

The pending FY 2024 Energy & Water Appropriations legislation contains a line item for more than \$1 billion for advanced modular power research and development. I urge that a significant amount be devoted to accelerator driven subcritical projects.

Therefore, I include in the RECORD the following article on the new legislation from the Capital News Illinois dated December 8, 2023:

PRITZKER SIGNS MEASURE ALLOWING NEW SMALL-SCALE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY IN ILLINOIS

(By Jerry Nowicki & Andrew Adams)

Gov. JB Pritzker on Friday signed into law a measure that will allow for the limited development of new nuclear power generation technology in the state.

The measure, House Bill 2473, does not allow new large-scale power generation facilities like the six plants that are already operational in the state, but rather allows for new smaller-scale emergent technology.

Since 1987, the state has had a moratorium on any new nuclear power construction until the federal government designates a long-term disposal site for nuclear waste—something that has never occurred. The new law will take effect on June 1, 2024, but because permitting nuclear energy takes many years at the federal level, the earliest a nuclear project could be brought online in Illinois would be in the 2030s.

HB 2473 creates a regulatory structure for the construction of small modular nuclear reactors, or SMRs. The bill limits the nameplate capacity of such reactors to 300 megawatts, about one-third the size of the smallest of the six existing nuclear power plants in Illinois. It also requires the state to perform a study that will inform rules for regulating SMRs, which must be adopted by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency by January 2026.

The bill's proponents say it's a necessary step as Illinois tries to end its reliance on carbon-emitting power sources over the next two decades. But its opponents say it distracts from Illinois' efforts to deploy 100 percent renewable energy production and is an endorsement of unproven technology.

The bill passed with bipartisan support in the Senate, 44-7, and the House, 98-8, on the final day of the fall veto session last month. The opposition came exclusively from Democrats. Pritzker vetoed an earlier version of the measure but helped usher the compromise through the legislature.

The bill's sponsors said after its passage that it has the potential to bolster Illinois' electric grid reliability as the state's energy mix becomes increasingly reliant on intermittent technologies such as wind and solar.

Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, sponsored the bill in the Senate, while Rep. Lance Yednock, D-Ottawa, was its House sponsor. Rezin noted last month that she is particularly interested in the potential for SMRs to be developed at the sites of former coal plants, avoiding the need to build new transmission lines, although that process could take many years.

David Kraft, an outspoken critic of nuclear energy and head of the Chicago-based advocacy group Nuclear Energy Information Service, testified against the measure at several points during the legislative process.

Kraft said he was concerned about the lack of existing SMR installations and the

unproven nature of the technology. While some nuclear reactors of this scale exist in other countries, no commercial SMRs have ever been built in the United States.

Counting Illinois, 11 states currently have some level of nuclear construction bans on the books. Since 2016, five other states have either repealed or weakened their bans. Several of the states that have lifted their bans have done so to pave the way for SMR technology.

But the biggest U.S. player in that industry has seen several recent setbacks.

In November, NuScale Power—the only company with a federally approved SMR design—announced that it was canceling its highly watched “Carbon Free Power Project” in Utah, which would have been the first commercial project with a NuScale reactor. Still, its leaders say the company will continue with its other projects, which are at varying steps of regulation and planning.

Rezin told Capitol News Illinois last month she hopes Illinois’ and other states’ moves to reverse their construction bans will encourage nuclear energy development in the U.S.

Pritzker did not issue a statement but signed the bill along with 15 others that were sent to his desk following November’s fall veto session. That included a measure that would require the state to purchase exclusively “zero-emission vehicles,” such as electric vehicles, after Jan. 1, 2030.

Senate Bill 1769 excludes law enforcement vehicles and vehicles purchased by the Illinois Department of Transportation as part of a program that provides buses to some mass transit systems.

COMMEMORATING THE MALAKOFF TIGERS STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. LANCE GOODEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. GOODEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the extraordinary achievement of the Malakoff Tigers in clinching the 3A Division 1 State Football Championship. Their remarkable undefeated season, culminating in a 16–0 record, has not only brought home the school’s first-ever football title but has also showcased the exceptional talent and spirit of Henderson County.

Special congratulations to Head Coach Jamie Driskell, quarterback Mike Jones, the Offensive MVP, and middle linebacker Parker Poteete, the Defensive MVP, for their outstanding leadership and skill. The unwavering dedication and hard work of the entire team and coaching staff are inspirational. The Malakoff Tigers have set a high bar for excellence, and I eagerly anticipate more triumphs and great success for both the team and Malakoff High School in the future.

LARRY HELMUTH

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Larry Helmuth for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Larry has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Larry, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Larry’s hard work, determination, and perseverance at Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Larry Helmuth on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MARION LEE

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a gifted carpenter, church leader, and good friend. Robert “Marion” Lee transitioned from this life on January 6, 2024. His love, kindness, warmth, and generosity will be well remembered and sorely missed.

Robert Marion Lee was born on December 20, 1932, in Charleston County, South Carolina. He was raised by his grandmother, Mary Middleton, and attended Charleston County schools. As a young boy, Marion learned the values of family and hard work, having worked on the family farm while also caring for his siblings. He maintained this devotion towards family as he became a father to his first son, Marshall Lee Cohen, and later married his wife of 49 years, Vermel Lee. This union was blessed with a daughter, Vera.

As an adult, Marion learned the trade of cabinetry and worked as a contractor. He built homes for countless families in Charleston County, and he took great pride in ensuring families had access to clean water in John’s Island, Peters Field, Hollywood, and other rural areas. He later worked as a rehabilitation specialist and a building inspector until he retired to care for his wife. Marion was known for building picnic tables for members of the community and delivering them in his old blue truck.

I came to know Mr. Lee through his activities throughout the Sea Islands of Charleston County. He served on various residential home builder commissions, the St. John’s Constituent School Board for District 9, the St. John’s Precinct No. 2 Election Commission, the Sea Island Health Care Center Board of Directors, the Rural Missions Board of Directors, the SC Fire Commission, and the St. John’s Water Company on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer. In addition, he and his wife fed and clothed people in need, visited the sick and shut in, and wrote encouraging letters to incarcerated individuals throughout their lives.

A man of deep faith, Marion joined Ferry Field Baptist Church in 1947, where he worshiped for 76 years. He was ordained a Deacon in 1967, served on the prayer and tarry service, and used his carpentry skills to repair and enhance the church’s beauty. He was equally devoted to the church’s youth, transporting carloads of children to Sunday school every week, and serving as Sunday school teacher and Superintendent. Marion also believed strongly in scripture’s words to “come

as you are.” As a young man, he often had to attend church service in work clothes, which imbued him with a commitment to making Ferry Field a welcoming place for all people, regardless of their attire. Marion loved singing hymns that embodied his love and trust in God and served on the Senior Choir and Male Choir for many years.

Left to cherish his memory are his two devoted children, six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, nine great-great-grandchildren, four adopted grandchildren, God-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, cousins, caregivers, and the entire neighborhood of Lincrest Road.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and our colleagues join me in recognizing the life and legacy of Robert “Marion” Lee. Marion often remarked that he felt “mighty blessed” for all the people and experiences he encountered throughout his life. I and the entire Charleston community are likewise blessed for having known Marion. His rich legacy will continue to touch generations of Charlestonians for years to come.

APPRECIATING AMBASSADOR HASAN MURAT MERCAN

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Türkiye Relations and Turkish Americans, I am grateful to recognize the Honorable Hasan Murat Mercan, Ambassador of Türkiye to the United States, for his past three years of service reinforcing Türkiye as a crucial NATO ally of America. This significant alliance is mutually beneficial for our nations, NATO membership with courageous troop participation in the Korean War in 1950, promotion of important fuel pipelines for European energy independence, facilitation of grain shipments to Egypt and Africa, restored economic relations with Armenia, to early crucial drone support of Ukraine, and Swedish admission to NATO.

Prior to being appointed as Ambassador of Türkiye to the U.S., Mercan served as Ambassador to Tokyo, in Japan, Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and Chairman of the Turkish Foreign Affairs Committee during the 23rd Term of the Turkish Parliament. Mercan also served as Chairman of the Turkish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Interparliamentary Defense and Security Assembly as well as the vice-president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Türkiye has been well represented with Ambassador Mercan and Mrs. Inci Mercan.

A highlight of my service in Congress was in August of last year, when I presented a wreath on behalf of the American people at the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Memorial at Antikabir in Ankara. I am grateful for my opportunity to coordinate with Ambassador Mercan in supporting the warmest relationship for Türkiye with their appreciated ally America and look forward to continuing that work with his successor.