

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING JOHN COLEMAN

**HON. MARK DESAULNIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 26, 2024*

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend and an esteemed leader in Contra Costa County, John Coleman, as he retires from the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Board of Directors after 33 years of dedicated service and is honored as the Lafayette Citizen of the Year.

Throughout his career, John has been instrumental in shaping vital water policy in our state, forging increased collaboration between a variety of California water agencies, working to protect the East Bay's water supply, and guiding the agency through multiple state-wide droughts. John was first elected to EBMUD's board in 1990 representing the communities of Alamo, Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Danville, Pleasant Hill, and San Ramon. John played a key role in the founding of the Freeport Regional Water Authority (FRWA), an agency tasked with guiding the financing, ownership, construction, and operations of the Freeport Regional Water Project. John is also the longest-serving board member in EBMUD's history.

Prior to his work with EBMUD, John served as President of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA). He also was President of the Lafayette Chamber Board and spearheaded the creation of the annual Lafayette Reservoir Run for Education. John has been a strong supporter of youth in our community, having served as Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 243 in Lafayette for more than 20 years and later going on to serve as an Eagle Advisor.

We are grateful for John's continued dedication to our community and wish him luck at his new post in the Calaveras County Water District. Please join me in honoring and congratulating John Coleman as he retires after more than three decades of devoted service with EBMUD.

PASSPORT SYSTEM REFORM AND  
BACKLOG PREVENTION ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. DARRELL ISSA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 19, 2024*

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in the RECORD a letter which my lead Democratic cosponsor, Mr. COSTA, and I received from the U.S. Travel Association expressing the support of the travel industry for the passage of the Passport System Reform and Backlog Prevention Act:

Hon. DARRELL ISSA,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Hon. JIM COSTA,  
*House of Representatives,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES ISSA AND COSTA: On behalf of the U.S. Travel Association (U.S. Travel), which represents all segments of America's travel industry, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 6610, the Passport System Reform and Backlog Prevention Act, which is a bipartisan measure that calls for the modernization of the State Department's passport processing capabilities. H.R. 6610 provides a much-needed framework for meeting the Department's commitment to improve efficiency, security, and customer experience within the passport application process.

As you know, America's travel industry plays a vital role in our Nation's economy, contributing significantly to revenue generation and job creation across all 50 states and territories. U.S. Travel's mission is to increase travel to and within the United States, and H.R. 6610 aligns with that mission. As the travel sector continues to recover from the pandemic, there is an urgent need to modernize that travel experience, improve travel IT infrastructure, and position the Department to meet increased demand for passports. In 2022 and 2023, the Department received a record-breaking number of passport applications driven by the surge in U.S. traveler demand for international trips, thereby causing a massive and persistent backlog in average processing times.

While there has been modest improvement in passport processing times since last summer, more needs to be done to bring about sustained progress. Significant improvements in both passport and visa processing times can be readily achieved through the long-overdue modernization of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' outdated IT systems. The legacy systems relied upon by Consular Affairs have significantly hindered the agency's ability to keep pace with demand and disrupted the travel experiences of millions of Americans each year. Accordingly, the modernization of IT infrastructure should be treated as a critical priority for delivering streamlined customer experience for passport and visa applicants, while ensuring the accuracy and security of those functions.

This modernization initiative also aligns with broader efforts to promote international travel and strengthen diplomatic relations. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is essential for the United States to maintain a robust and efficient passport system that facilitates the movement of people and fosters a travel sector that drives economic growth and job creation.

The U.S. Travel Association commends your bipartisan leadership in introducing H.R. 6610 and looks forward to working alongside you to advocate for its passage.

Sincerely,

TORI EMERSON BARNES,  
*Executive Vice President,*  
*Public Affairs and Policy.*

MARCH 18, 2024.

RECOGNIZING LISA A. WILKEN

**HON. ANDRÉ CARSON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 26, 2024*

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a Hoosier whose service to country and community has endured for over three decades. Lisa Wilken is a former airman and advocate who has dedicated her career to uplifting her fellow veterans.

Lisa's service began in the United States Air Force and continues today through her work with veteran service organizations as a fierce advocate for veteran-friendly legislation at both the Indiana Statehouse and the United States Congress.

As an active member of multiple veteran organizations, Lisa has advocated for veterans at every stage. Far too often the assistance veterans require post-service is not accessible, or just nonexistent. Lisa's experience in the Air Force enabled her to become an advocate for lifechanging legislation at the Indiana Statehouse, including securing tax exemptions for disabled veterans, Veteran Service Officer accreditation, tuition coverage and free programs for dependents of disabled veterans, and the creation of the State Women Veteran Coordinator position at the Indiana Department of Veteran Affairs.

Lisa has prioritized recognizing and serving overlooked constituencies in the military community, especially women veterans. She testified before Congress to raise awareness for the lack of funding for military sexual trauma veterans. In 2017, she was honored by the State of Indiana with the Torchbearer Award, and in 2023, she was inducted into the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame. Lisa Wilken has established a legacy in the Indianapolis and surrounding communities that will be felt and deeply appreciated for future generations of service women and men.

Even within the veteran community, women veterans tend to be overlooked and underrecognized. That is why I am proud to honor the many Hoosier women veterans who selflessly serve our community. Beginning with its namesake, the Sheila Corcoran Hoosier Women Hero Award was created to highlight exemplary Hoosier women veterans whose service to their community and Nation is unparalleled. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Lisa Wilken. I thank Lisa for her service and for her advocacy as she continues to be a voice of her peers, for her persistence, and for her commitment to the veteran community.

• 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.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE KERRVILLE VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

### HON. CHIP ROY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 26, 2024*

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th birthday of the Kerrville Veterans Affairs Medical Center in my district. This beautiful campus serves veterans from across multiple counties in the Texas Hill Country.

The Benevolent War Risk Society and the American Legion recognized the need for medical care of World War I veterans. Countless veterans contracted tuberculosis during and after that conflict. Fundraising for the hospital began in 1919. The generous Schreiner family of Kerrville donated over 700 acres of land for the hospital grounds. Unfortunately, funding ran out in early 1921. The American Legion came to the project's rescue and eventually donated the hospital to the State of Texas.

As a result, the name "American Legion Memorial Sanatorium" was bequeathed on the facility. The first patients were admitted on June 22, 1921. The federal Veterans Administration began to lease the hospital from the State of Texas two years later. The facility became the 93rd veteran hospital to open in the United States on July 12, 1923, under the name "Veterans Administration Hospital at Kerrville." There were a total of 15 buildings on campus at the time, some of which are still used today.

President Herbert Hoover created the Veterans Administration in July 1930, changing the name of the hospital yet again. Over the

years, efforts were made to expand. A two million-dollar project in 1947 resulted in 400 additional beds and a total of 8 hospital floors. January of 1960 saw the conversion of the facility to full general medical services.

On March 15, 1995, the South Texas Veterans Healthcare System was created when the Kerrville VA Medical Center merged with the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Hospital in San Antonio.

Over the years, the Veterans Administration donated most of the original land to various local entities. The current footprint of the Kerrville VA Medical Center is 70 acres, including a Veterans National Cemetery. My constituents will gather on April 12, 2024 to recognize the significant contributions of this medical facility to Texas veterans.

### RECOGNIZING CHERYL HURD

### HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 26, 2024*

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Speaker, having been born and raised in Vallejo, California and graduating from California State University, East Bay, Cheryl is a true Bay Area native. With a focus on the local news impacting my constituents most, Cheryl covered a wide range of stories, from community events to breaking news. Her reporting showcased her dedication to providing accurate and impactful journalism to her viewers.

Her love for covering breaking news was known to anyone who crossed her path. Cheryl was the first to report about the BALCO steroid scandal that rocked the sports world. By shedding a light on the banned performance-enhancing substances, Cheryl was

able to hold corporations accountable and protect the integrity of our athletics. I truly admire the tenacity she showed to always follow through on her stories.

Like many journalists in California, Cheryl was tasked with covering natural disasters such as wildfires and earthquakes that devastated entire communities. I'm thankful for the compassion she showed to the victims of those events as well as her work to raise awareness of the increasing risks posed by disasters including the flooding, wildfires, heatwaves, and drought Californians now face every year.

Over her 20-year legacy, Cheryl was honored with an award from the Bay Area Black Journalist Association and four Emmy awards presented by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences San Francisco. I'm so proud that her years of experience and commitment were met with accolades and applause.

Aside from her time in broadcast, Cheryl is also one of the founding members of Friends of Faith, a non-profit organization founded 1987, that raises money for women diagnosed with breast cancer in the East Bay. After realizing the financial hardships that East Bay cancer patients are burdened with, Cheryl, along with her peers, began fundraising to provide stipends for women in need of financial assistance during their treatment journey. This is just one of the many ways Cheryl cared for her neighbors.

Cheryl's professionalism and selflessness has made our community a better place. Now that she has more time, I hope Cheryl is able to enjoy more time with her family and adorable dog, Stripe. I'm privileged to call her a friend, and I wish her a joyful retirement. It surely is well-deserved.