

HONORING CARLO A. SCISSURA,
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE
NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS

HON. NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 19, 2024

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following Proclamation honoring Carlo A. Scissura, President and CEO of The New York Building Congress:

Whereas Carlo A. Scissura Esq., President & CEO of The New York Building Congress, was honored on April 18, 2024, by the National Italian American Foundation in recognition of his service and contributions to the Italian-American community.

Whereas Carlo A. Scissura was born and raised in Bensonhurst and is a lifelong Brooklyn resident, currently residing in Bay Ridge with his daughter, Teresa Rose. Scissura is a proud graduate of Pace University and Pace Law School. He had his private law practice in Dyker Heights before joining the Brooklyn Borough President's Office. Scissura previously served on the staffs of New York State Senator Vincent Gentile and Assemblyman Peter Abbate.

Whereas for nearly five years, Carlo A. Scissura previously served as Chief of Staff and General Counsel to Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. Scissura restructured operations at Borough Hall, drove the borough's economic development, and collaborated extensively with the Mayor's Office, City Council, and Economic Development Corporation. Carlo also served on the boards of the EDC, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, and the Brooklyn Public Library.

Whereas Carlo A. Scissura is a member of the Boards of the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp., The New York City Regional Economic Development Council, ACE Mentorship, Salvadori Center, and the Friends of the BQX. Carlo is a former member of Community Board 11 in Brooklyn and the District 20 School Board and Community Education Council. Scissura is also the Chair of the Federation of Italian-American Organizations, where he has led the opening of the new Italian Cultural and Community Center in Brooklyn.

Whereas in January 2017, Carlo A. Scissura was named President & CEO of The New York Building Congress. Under his leadership, Carlo and his team have achieved significant growth in membership and visibility across New York City and the surrounding region. They have maintained a strong focus on securing infrastructure investments from city, state, and federal governments. Membership has soared by over 200 percent, reaching more than 2,200 members. Additionally, the Chamber has been nationally recognized for creating exemplary models in business development, outreach, technical assistance, and regional branding. Thanks to Carlo's leadership, the New York Building Congress is stronger and more influential than ever.

Whereas Carlo A. Scissura was the Chair of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway redevelopment panel and oversaw the replacement of the BQE from the Atlantic Avenue interchange to Sands Street in Brooklyn. Scissura received numerous honors for his contributions.

The people of New York City are thankful for years of Scissura's advocacy, development, contributions, and revitalization efforts throughout the five boroughs for the betterment of all New Yorkers.

CELEBRATING THE GRAND OPENING OF THE FOOD SHED CO-OP

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 19, 2024

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Food Shed Co-op family on their achievement in organizing and establishing a community-owned grocery store. The concept of establishing a cooperative emerged from discussions among a group of friends seeking to strengthen their community. They collectively decided to create a community-owned store in McHenry County, embarking on an unpredictable and awe-inspiring journey. Their dedication to bringing this dream to fruition is truly commendable.

Food Shed Co-op is more than a simple grocery store, it is a symbol of the determination of the community. It is committed to providing everyone with access to fresh, locally sourced, and sustainably produced food. With a mission to support local farmers and producers, reduce environmental impact, and foster a sense of community, Food Shed Co-op is a shining example of what can be achieved when like-minded individuals come together for a common cause.

Nearly 2,100 people purchased equity shares in the co-op, reflecting the strong support of the community during the project's development and grand launch. This steady belief in Food Shed Co-op's mission speaks volumes about the community's commitment to building a vibrant, neighborhood-focused supermarket that is accessible to everyone.

I am proud to represent such an innovative group of individuals who continually strive to uplift their community and applaud the vital work they are doing to create a healthier and more sustainable future in McHenry County. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Food Shed Co-op in celebrating their grand opening.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE SLOGAN, "FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA, PALESTINE WILL BE FREE" IS ANTISEMITIC AND ITS USE MUST BE CONDEMNED

SPEECH OF

HON. VAL T. HOYLE

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I will vote in support of H. Res. 883, a non-binding resolution that condemns the use of a slogan that has been used by some individuals and groups for antisemitic purposes, including as a rallying cry to deny the right to self-determination of the Jewish people or even to eliminate

the State of Israel from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

I believe the antisemitic use of this slogan should rightfully be condemned. For example, this slogan has been widely used by terrorist entities—including Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah—to encourage future attacks on Israel, the Jewish community and Jewish institutions. With antisemitism and antisemitic attacks on the rise in the U.S. and around the world, we must swiftly condemn antisemitism in all its forms.

However, this resolution should have been written better. For example, H. Res. 883, fails to acknowledge that some who use the phrase do so to advocate for Palestinian liberation and equality, and others—including some members of the Jewish community—use the phrase to advocate for an end to the Israeli control and annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. The resolution should have noted that this slogan is not always intended to be used as antisemitic and not all who use the phrase are antisemitic.

As with other resolutions this Congress, H. Res. 883 also fails to condemn antisemitic acts from those on the far-right, including white nationalists who have increasingly promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories and have threatened the lives and livelihoods of Jewish Americans.

H. Res. 883 also treats the slogan "from the river to the sea" as one-sided. However, this phrase has also been used by right-wing Israelis—including by Prime Minister Netanyahu himself in January—to deny the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Let me be clear: I believe that both Israelis and Palestinians have a right to their own state. That's why I strongly support a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians recognize each other's right to live in peace and have prosperity.

I also unequivocally condemn all forms of antisemitism, and I am appalled by the significant rise in antisemitism we've seen in recent years and especially after Hamas's October 7th terrorist attacks on Israel. If the House Republican majority were serious about tackling antisemitism, they would support President Biden's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, would quit trying to defund the Office of Civil Rights for Title VI enforcement which protects Jewish students, and would increase funding for the High-Risk Nonprofit Grant Program to secure Jewish institutions as a start. I urge House Republicans to prioritize real action to combat hate, rather than continue to waste time and resources on non-binding resolutions.

That's why I've cosponsored legislation that thoughtfully and powerfully condemns the rise of antisemitism in the United States and calls on Congress to support the above substantive actions to tackle antisemitism, which congressional Republicans have so far refused to do.

FOURTH AMENDMENT IS NOT FOR
SALE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Ms. McCollum. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4639, the Fourth Amendment Is Not For Sale Act.

As Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, my priority is our national security and to protect Americans from foreign threats. Our Intelligence Community agencies at times purchase what is known as “commercially available information” from data brokerage companies to gather information on foreign spies and bad actors, and to protect America from malign foreign influence. When they purchase this data, they cannot be certain that it is entirely free of any U.S. citizen’s information. In order to protect citizens, agencies are already required to take steps to ensure that this incidentally obtained data is removed.

However, these data brokerage companies collect the personal information of Americans through their social media profiles, public records, and other commercial sources. They then sell this information to companies, organizations, or any entity with an interest in collecting data on American citizens—including foreign adversaries like China, Russia, or even cartels. H.R. 4639 would do nothing to keep any of these other entities from exploiting and sharing American’s data.

Instead of prohibiting our own intelligence agencies from accessing commercially available information to obtain foreign intelligence, we must take steps to address the broader vulnerability of Americans’ data. Congress needs to take steps to protect Americans, not undermine our Intelligence agencies and put the United States at a deep disadvantage against our adversaries.

REMEMBERING COLONEL RALPH
PUCKETT, JR., USA (RET.)**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 19, 2024

Mr. Bishop of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a loving husband, dedicated father, committed soldier and dear friend of longstanding, Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr., USA (Ret.). Sadly, Colonel Puckett passed away on April 8, 2024. He leaves behind a legacy of service that will be emulated by many for years to come. A memorial service honoring his remarkable life will be held on April 20, 2024, at the National Infantry Museum Parade Field adjacent to Fort Moore, Georgia.

Colonel Puckett was born on December 8, 1926, in Tifton, Georgia. He graduated from

Baylor High School and then enrolled at Georgia Tech before enlisting in the United States Army during World War II. Colonel Puckett graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1949. He was assigned as Infantry Lieutenant for the Eighth U.S. Army Ranger Company when the Korean War began.

On November 25, 1950, during the Korean conflict, the First Lieutenant began a multiday operation with the Eighth Army Ranger Company, a company composed of 51 U.S. and nine Korean Soldiers against a barrage of Chinese Troops on Hill 205. During the initial assault, Colonel Puckett exposed himself to enemy fire, rallying pinned down U.S. troops to advance and take the hill from its defenders. In the following hours, the temperatures dropped, and the Chinese attempted to retake the hill. Colonel Puckett radioed an artillery strike to stop the enemy’s advance.

Over the course of the attacks, Colonel Puckett sustained several wounds to his left shoulder, feet, thighs, and buttocks. Despite being severely wounded, he was still able to command his company and call on artillery to avert enemy attacks before being carried to safety by two of his troops.

During his 22-year career, Colonel Puckett received many awards including the Distinguished Service Cross twice, along with two Silver Stars for valor, two Bronze Star medals, and five Purple Hearts. In 1992, he became one of the first people to be inducted into the United States Army Ranger Hall of Fame.

Because of his courageous valor and after many years of efforts on his behalf, Colonel Puckett was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Joseph R. Biden on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Colonel Puckett gave himself to his country and to so many for so long. As such, he is one of our nation’s most decorated war heroes. Even after his military service ended, he found a way to give back to those who came after him. He remained very active with military affairs, including volunteering with the Ranger Brigade. Colonel Puckett also served as an executive with Outward Bound, a non-profit educational organization that exposes students, especially those from cities, to wilderness settings.

Colonel Puckett accomplished much in his life, but none of this would have been possible without the grace of God, and the enduring love and support of his wife, Jean, and their children Martha and Thomas.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the 765,000 people of Georgia’s Second Congressional District in celebrating the life and legacy of Colonel Ralph Puckett, Jr., USA (Ret.). Moreover, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who mourn his loss. May they all be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

RECOGNIZING KEVIN O’KEEFE

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 19, 2024

Mr. Nadler. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of Kevin O’Keefe, a dedicated community leader in East Midtown Manhattan.

Kevin has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to our community through his roles as the founder and president of the St. Vartan Park Conservancy, the president of the Manhattan East Community Association, a member of Manhattan Community Board 6, a trustee of the Murray Hill Neighborhood Association, a board member of the Stuyvesant Cove Park Association, an advisory board member of the Village Trip, a coach, an entrepreneur, a writer, a husband, and a father.

In these roles, Kevin has led multiple initiatives to increase the quality of life in East Midtown. In 2019, he led a major advocacy campaign to reopen an East Midtown garden and lawn after decades of closure. Since then, thousands of individuals have enjoyed their time inside the now-public green space.

As a member of Manhattan Community Board 6, Kevin led an initiative for members of the public to make presentations to the board to better understand community needs. In this capacity, he also serves as a committee chair and member of the Youth and Education Committee and Health and Human Services Committee.

Furthermore, Kevin’s commitment extends to youth sports and education. He is a former all-American athlete who volunteers as a sports coach, heading the track and field program at a local East Midtown school and running “Swish You Were Here,” a community basketball net-replacement initiative.

Kevin is also an entrepreneur and accomplished writer. He is the author of the nonfiction bestseller *The Average American*, which follows O’Keefe’s journey to find the nation’s most statistically average person. The book has inspired many people to find a middle ground when talking with those with differing views and has earned accolades from former President Barack Obama. In his professional life, he has led New York Sports Tours and other prominent brands and companies.

On April 25, 2023, Kevin was honored at the Samuel J. Tilden Democratic Club’s 70th anniversary gala with the Platinum Anniversary Award for Distinguished Service.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that we recognize Kevin O’Keefe for his outstanding service and leadership. His dedication not only enhances the vibrancy of East Midtown but also sets a commendable example of civic engagement and community spirit. We are grateful for his contributions and proud to count him as a distinguished member of our community.