

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

EULOGY BY MONSIGNOR SYLVA
AT THE FUNERAL MASS OF CON-
GRESSMAN BILL PASCRELL

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, Bill Pascrell was one of the most unique and authentic people I have ever had the privilege of knowing and serving with as both a colleague and a dear friend. He was so loved and appreciated for his candor and for the authentic way that he communicated his concerns for the people of Paterson and all of New Jersey. The Congress will never quite be the same, and nor will the 'corner,' our committee, or the Democratic Caucus. He was loved and respected by both Democrats and Republicans. He had that kind of impact on people and especially his friends and family for whom he deeply loved. Our hearts go out to his wife Elsie, his sons William III, Glenn, and David, his grandchildren, and the entire Pascrell family.

It is my honor to include in the RECORD a eulogy delivered by Monsignor Eugene R. (Geno) Sylva of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Paterson, NJ, who on August 28th captured the essence of the Late Honorable Bill Pascrell:

A reading from the Holy Gospel According to Luke: "For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners who love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies, do good to them, lend expecting nothing back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For He himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as also your Father is merciful." The Gospel of the Lord.

Please be seated.

Elsie, Bill, Glenn, David, Kelly, the whole family, please know that our love and our prayers have been with you and will continue to be with you. And to have all of you here, and to have his bishop, deacons, priests, to have his beloved firefighters, his wonderful group of pastors, his peers in politics—the Congressman would've loved this. And Bill, I think you're right, if your father was speaking, he'd still be talking now. Because we tried at times, there was no doing this (motions to cut off) once he got rollin'.

On the morning of Sherriff Richard Berdnik's funeral mass, this cathedral was overflowing with people. Police officers, firefighters lined the streets outside, the haunting sounds of the bagpipes wailed, when all of a sudden, my phone in my pocket begins to buzz. Worried that there might be an emergency outside, I take the phone out of my pocket, and I see the name Congressman Bill Pascrell. So, in a hushed voice, I answered the phone, hoping that The Congressman realized that the funeral was about to

begin. There on the line, was the frantic voice of The Congressman, "Monsignor, delay the start of the mass, I'm running late! You have to stall for 15 minutes." This is no exaggeration. "I loved the sheriff, I can't be late for the mass, I have to be there, I'm tellin' ya, start late." I gotta be honest with you, my heart dropped. I'm sure we've all been in those situations where the beloved Congressman has spoken very . . . strongly. You never wanted to let him down, right? You see, after the Sherriff's wake the evening before, the Congressman had been rushed to the hospital and was only being released that very morning. He wanted to go home with Elsie and get changed so that he could look presentable for the funeral mass for his beloved friend, Sherriff Berdnik. Now, most normal men, they probably would've gone home and gone to bed. Not Bill. He had to go to church to pray for his friend.

But that's the Congressman William J. Pascrell Jr. If he loved ya, there was no extent that he would not go to in order to help ya. But what made him truly remarkable, as it is easy to help those whom you love, and who you love, was that Bill would do all that he could to assist you even if he didn't like you, and you might not have liked him. Yes, he was a self-proclaimed tough guy, a street fighter from Paterson, "with only one T!" Right, how many times did we hear that? But what made him so remarkable, and please take this to heart, the Congressman could fight without hate. He could fight without hate. He could become enraged and angry, I'm sure we all felt that, without becoming vengeful. How many times did he and I argue bitterly? And I'm sure you can guess on what some of those issue might have been. I mean we really slugged it out. But as heated as the discussions may have become, however, he never let the disagreement—his anger—lead him to disregard my position, my personhood. And in those exchanges, I got to see his heart, and he took the time to see my heart.

And how was he able to do this? Because he fought one particular prized fight every day. One that was even more important than all of those battles on Capitol Hill. And what was that fight? Not to allow his justified anger—to make the world a better place—to simmer and to settle into hatred. For St. Thomas Aquinas had written, "anger becomes a mortal sin only if through the fierceness of anger, one falls away from the love of God and his neighbor." You see, anger is not always contrary to love. For it seeks at times to make things right. It's only sin when it's no longer tethered to love, which is the greatest good.

Bill was able to tether his fierceness to love. His fiery character, which was trained in virtue by his dear parents, St. John's High School, and yes, the Jesuits at Fordham, to bring about good for God's kingdom. Friends, if there ever was a quote to capture the essence of Congressman Pascrell, it was the words of St. Augustine, whose feast day we celebrate today, so thank you for the other quote from St. Augustine: "Hope has two beautiful daughters—their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are and Courage to see that they do not remain the way that they are".

Because Bill was a man of justified anger, not of hatred—a man of courage, not of intimidation, the Congressman offered to each

one of us in our own ways hope. I just invite you for a moment to recall one of those moments of hope that Congressman Bill Pascrell gave you. A moment of hope that might have been uncomfortable in the moment, but it got you to a place you never thought you could get, and you got.

Friends, as wonderful as those memories are, we're not here today merely to recall those earthly moments of hope that Bill gave us, but to pray for his eternal soul, won only through Christ's victorious battle over sin and death. For it's only Christ's victorious battle, not those that we wage, that we find Christian hope. Our politicians, you provide us with optimism, and boy, do we need that. But only Christ graces us with eternal hope, through His victory, not on Capitol Hill in Washington, but a hill called Golgotha in Jerusalem. How we need both human hope and theological Christian hope. For what is Christian hope? Christian hope is trusting in another who is capable of extending and expanding our limited hope and optimism into the future, into the Divine. And that other is Jesus Christ. Christian hope is more than optimism, a belief that all will be well tomorrow. Hope has a name and a face, hope is a person, and he is Jesus Christ. And with hope and with the Lord, we can face the future without having to know what tomorrow looks like or what even awaits us. With hope, with Him, we know that our lives will not end in emptiness. We have hope in the person of Jesus who is alive and always with us. We know Him and we trust Him. Friends in the resurrection, the risen Lord speaks to us and tells us, "Yes you need me, for no one can do this on their own, no matter the titles we have, the power we have. Yes, you need me, and you love me, and you have me, for I died for you." Friends, in our grief today, we are offered hope amidst our tears. For with hope in Christ, we see the loss of our husband, our father, our grandfather, our peer, and our friend in the light of the resurrection, for even now through our tears the Lord makes the sunset of death give itself way to the dawning of eternal life. Filled with hope, as we just pause for a moment to remember a man who assisted us in this life. So now we pause to pray for him into the next. For you see, if our relationships—our love—ended in death, then Bill's death would be a tragedy: an opportunity lost, a wound perpetually raw. Thus, it is death that we must ask the most important question I really believe: "Can I love someone more, even after they died?" And the answer is yes. And how? By praying our loved one on the final road, through the purification of sin, to his final home in heaven. And friends, speaking of the road to heaven, I'm reminded of something interested about the road to Paterson. Bill Pascrell III this week told me something interesting about his father that I never knew. That Governor Murphy, back in 2020, designated Route 19 the William J. Pascrell Highway. Right? But before you clap; Governor Murphy, that was wonderful. But . . . while you clap, Billy told me that the other day, I thought to myself 'how did I not know that?' You know why I didn't know it? There's no sign telling us that. Sorry Governor, there's no sign. I had to do it. Sorry Mayor. Sorry. Thanks. The road the Congressman has taken, you Elsie, Bill, David, Glenn, the entire family, you've been on with him, you were with him

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

through each battle, though there may be no public signs designated to his road or your road. That's ok. You and Dad never needed fame. You see, you knew that he loved you more than everyone else and knew that it was you who allowed him to fight the good fight each day.

And Elsie, having seen you both side-by-side for 30 years, I believe it was only your sweetness, your humility, your strength, your goodness, which in the end, allowed him to win the most important prized fight of his life: that of being man of justified anger, rather than one who ever had a hateful heart. For in the end, Elsie, he always knew that he had you, his greatest prize ever.

By the way, just finishing, you're wondering about Sherriff Berdnik's funeral—what did he do? I was really in a pickle, half Polish, half Italian. I had to start the mass on time for our Polish Sheriff, because I knew he would want that. But being half Italian, I knew I had to wait for our Italian Congressman, for I feared his wrath if I didn't wait. I was saved in the end by the Paterson Police Department and Passaic County Sheriff's department, because I called everyone and said, "Get to Ninth Ave, and get the Congressman and Elsie here." It was miraculous, I think we started two minutes late.

Congressman Pascrell, my dear friend, thank you. I bet you speedily arrive home to heaven, where there will be no need more for you to be fiery and fierce, and where I'm sure Paterson will be spelled correctly. And don't worry Bill, we're going to get that sign up on Route 19.

Bill, through the mercy of God and the help of our prayers, just get home to heaven.

OPENING PRAYER BY HOUSE
CHAPLAIN MARGARET GRUN
KIBBEN

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD the Opening Prayer offered by our House Chaplain, Margaret Grun Kibben on September 9th to grieve the loss of the Late Honorable Bill Pascrell:

In these days with much to be attended to, policies to be written, elections to be run; When the tasks not yet completed vie for attention, in contest with all that must yet be achieved;

When each day is a whirlwind of obligations and demands, break into our thoughts and concerns O Lord, and remind us again how precious is the life you give to each of us.

As we grieve the loss of our dear friend and colleague Representative Bill Pascrell, may it be his passionate and compassionate commitment to this country—and the people he was proud to represent—that inspires us to assess our spirit of service.

May it be his tender heart and gracious kindness that call us to love those with whom we labor in these chambers.

God our Creator, like trees planted by streams of water, may we each, like Bill Pascrell, yield fruit in our season. In the days that you give us, may our leaves not wither. In all that we do, may all be done for you. In this may our lives prosper with the certainty of your favor.

In your righteous name we pray.

HONORING JANA BOMMERSBACH

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life and legacy of a legendary Arizona journalist, Jana Bommersbach, who passed away on July 17, 2024, at the age of 78 years old.

A North Dakota native, Jana moved to Arizona after earning her master's degree at the University of Michigan. It's in Arizona that she began an incredible career, which revolved around her love of the American West and all its colorful characters.

When Jana started at the Arizona Republic in the 1970s, she was one of just six women reporters in the newsroom. She worked her way up from reporter to editor, first for the Republic and later the Phoenix New Times. Because of her dogged reporting, the Arizona Press Club named her Arizona Journalist of the Year and honored her with its top investigative journalism prize, the Don Bolles Award, multiple times.

Jana's talents took her well beyond the newsroom when one of those-award winning stories turned into her hit book, *The Trunk Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd*. Nominated for the Edgar Allan Poe Award and winning Arizona's only literary prize, *The Trunk Murderess* revisits the complicated story of Winnie Ruth Judd and a more than 60-year-old murder case, giving us a glimpse of Phoenix as a young frontier town. Jana earned the elderly Judd's trust, getting her to tell her side of the story for the very first time. That was Jana—reporting on true crime before it was trendy—because she understood just how much these stories matter.

Her life's work brought attention to the issues closest to her heart, like mental health and domestic violence. She paired vigorous journalism with selfless advocacy, giving her time to countless nonprofits. In 2020, she was inducted into the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame, rightly recognizing her lifetime of achievement.

More than anything, Jana was a joy to be around: a quick-witted, gifted storyteller who could leave any room in tears of laughter. She kept friends from all backgrounds and political parties and knew how to throw political jabs with a grin. Congress should take a lesson from her.

A trailblazer and fierce advocate for the voiceless, Jana's impact will live on through her work and the countless lives she brightened. We now do our best to keep her spirit with us by aspiring to be more like her. To live a life of purpose, integrity and fun. We join her friends and family in grief and gratitude, thankful we bore witness to her incredible legacy, full of stories to be told for generations to come.

Thank you to Jana, and Godspeed.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID ROUZER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Mr. ROUZER. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call No. 419, I mistakenly voted yea when I intended to vote nay.

OPPOSITION TO H.R. 8333, H.R. 1516, H.R. 1398, H.R. 1425, H.R. 7980, AND H.R. 9456

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to a slate of Republican bills offered this week that will do more harm than good in defending the United States' interests from the Chinese Communist Party.

Immediately upon their return from the August district work period, House Republicans have picked right back up with their prioritization of political talking points over responsible legislation. The Republican Majority is pushing forward a package of bills that revive failed programs, forgo due process, and undermine our academic institutions and domestic supply chains. Under the guise of deterring the influence of the Chinese Communist Party, the bills on the flow this week actually make it harder for us to protect national security interests and serve the interests of the American people.

H.R. 8333, the BIOSECURE Act, lists specific biopharmaceutical companies that are subject to federal contracting bans with no clear indication of why those companies were chosen. The bill lacks any due process to add or remove a company as a "biotechnology company of concern." This sets a dangerous precedent going forward for companies that find themselves listed in this bill—or any other similar legislation.

H.R. 1516, To establish Department of Homeland Security funding restrictions on institutions of higher education that have a relationship with Confucius Institutes, and for other purposes, defines any connection to a Chinese public school or university as a relationship that is a threat to U.S. security. It would bar Universities with any of these connections from receiving any funds from the Department of Homeland Security, whether that funding is for securing college campuses against possible school shootings or receiving financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after an emergency.

The Protect America's Innovation and Economic Security from CCP Act of 2024, H.R. 1398, is equally responsible. The Republican Majority would revive a defunct program at the Department of Justice that failed to address any of the actual threats posed by the Chinese Government and only succeeded in ruining the careers of academics and scientists of Chinese descent. Discriminatory impacts aside, the bill is plainly redundant, as the Department of Justice already prosecutes cases of economic espionage and trade secret theft.

H.R. 1425, the No WHO Pandemic Preparedness Treaty Without Senate Approval