

Farmers are also suffering as water meant for irrigation and livestock is being diverted with little success in actually protecting endangered species.

This policy has failed on all fronts. We are saving neither the suckerfish, nor protecting the region's critical ecosystems or the agricultural economy.

Madam Speaker, I urge this body to reassess the water management in the Klamath Basin to ensure that our farmers, wildlife, and communities get the water they need and not be left in crisis constantly.

SERGEANT NICOLE GEE AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

(Mr. KILEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KILEY. Madam Speaker, today, Sergeant Nicole Gee of Roseville was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor that Congress can confer.

Nicole's story has inspired millions across the country. Her heroism is cause for such pride in our community. Her loss remains so difficult to fathom.

A graduate of Oakmont High School, she was one of the 13 Americans killed during the withdrawal from Afghanistan. She had volunteered to go to the Hamid Karzai International Airport to help with the evacuation.

Her fellow marines will report that she worked tirelessly, foregoing sleep and rest to help as many women and children escape as she could.

Many have seen this heart-wrenching photo Nicole posted shortly before her death, holding a baby and saying how much she loved serving our country.

Over the last 3 years, we have continued to honor the legacy of Sergeant Gee. Her former high school, Oakmont, created the Sergeant Nicole Gee Memorial Scholarship. West Roseville is now home to Nicole Gee Road. The Women's Veterans Alliance now annually awards the Beyond the Call of Duty Award in Nicole's honor.

We will carry on the memory of Nicole's life and sacrifice in the years ahead and faithfully abide the solemn responsibility America owes to a fallen soldier: to honor, to memorialize, to never forget, so that Sergeant Gee's legacy will forever be woven into the fabric of our communities.

HONORING KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT PARK

(Mr. MEUSER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEUSER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Knoebels Amusement Park, a legendary family-based institution located in Elysburg, Pennsylvania.

Knoebels started from very humble beginnings in 1926. What began as a simple gathering place along a roaring

creek has turned into a top amusement park in Pennsylvania and throughout the Northeast.

I especially want to recognize Mr. Dick Knoebel and the entire Knoebel family for their dedication to Pennsylvania and to making very happy and lasting memories for so many.

Knoebels recently earned two prestigious Golden Ticket awards from Amusement Today for best food and best wooden coaster, which I highly recommend, for the Phoenix.

These awards are the pinnacle of recognition in the amusement industry.

Knoebels is truly a place where families come together from around the country to create lasting memories, and I was very, very happy to host my first annual constituent appreciation picnic at the park just this last month.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate the entire Knoebels family for making Pennsylvania the happiest place on Earth.

REMEMBERING AND HONORING REPRESENTATIVE BILL PASCRELL, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, when I got the message of Mr. Pascrell's death, it was, like, that can't be. He was just that type of person that when you looked at him every day, he embodied everything that this Chamber stands for.

Paterson, New Jersey, could not have had a better champion than Bill Pascrell because they were one and the same. He never, ever changed his mind on anything because he never made up his mind casually. He knew who he was. He knew where he was from. He knew what he stood for, and he knew everything about the people he represented.

When you first get here, you don't know anybody, but I remember walking down the hall and saw this person being interviewed. I said: Who is this guy? They said: That is Bill Paterson—I mean, Bill Pascrell. Well, it is the same thing: Bill Paterson, BILL PASCRELL. I said: He is something else.

Then I got a chance to serve on the same committee as he did. I don't think you could find a finer example of what it means to be a Representative of a certain place at a certain time,

and he embodied it in every simple way you could possibly do it.

As we go through life, there are people you are never going to forget. And as long as one of us is alive, we are never going to forget Bill Paterson—I keep calling him Paterson—Bill Pascrell—because I am just so used to him talking about Paterson all the time.

Every time I came into committee—Mr. NEAL and I were talking about this—the first thing he would ask me is: "Hey, KELL, how is your wife? I know she hasn't been doing really well." I said: "She is fine, Billy. She is fine. How about you?" He said: "You know what? She is down here with me right now, so I think it is working. I think it is working all right."

Bill's concern was always for somebody else, not for him. It is so hard today to find, in this Chamber, especially, because we have forgotten who it is that we are. We simply represent three-quarters of a million people and what they stand for. You could not find another Member whose heart beat every moment of his life as Bill Pascrell.

Because of where I am in my life, I am saying good-bye to people more often than hello. I have watched a lot of my friends pass, and I keep going back to how sad it is to lose them. More importantly, it would have been much sadder if they had never existed.

If Bill Pascrell had not sat over there, if we hadn't sat in committee together, if we hadn't been able to talk about the issues—he never spoke casually about anything. He knew what he was talking about, and he made sure you understood him. I could not be more proud and more sorrowful today to have had a friend who was so loyal and a colleague who you could count on. He was somebody who you knew, at the end of every day, his concern, when he finally put his head on the pillow and went to sleep, was for the people he represented, not for himself.

I never expected him not to be here. Now, we will look across the dais, and I will see that empty chair. I will think: He may not be in that chair, but his words are still in this Chamber and always will be.

Mr. NEAL and I, I think, would probably disappoint some of the Members that are here now, the new people, that we get along really well. For some reason, in today's world, you are not allowed to get along with people from the other side, and I think that is unusual.

Everything in our lives is depending on each other to come up with the right solutions all the time. I really cherish the time I have been here. I am going to miss this guy incredibly because he was so concerned about other people.

We could talk for hours about this, but I keep thinking the same thing. As tragic as it is that Bill will not be here, the greater tragedy would have been if

he never was here because he truly embodies everything that a Representative should be. He was solid as a rock all the time.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), my good friend, to talk about our good friend and remember a little bit about those hours and minutes and times that we have spent together.

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for doing this and helping bring us along this evening.

There is nobody that went at it with Mr. KELLY more vigorously in the Ways and Means Committee than Bill Pascrell. After the battle, the ensuing argument, we would be out to dinner that night, and Bill would have a drink and would say: KELLY is all right. I like KELLY.

I think that is the way he saw the Ways and Means Committee and, in fact, the way he saw the world.

This Special Order is in honor of our very important colleague, so we rise tonight in honor of Bill. By the way, MIKE, calling him Bill Paterson, that is appropriate. Anybody that has ever been to Paterson, they were just like him. Nobody talked softly. I was there two or three times. Everybody yelled. I thought that is the order of the day; that is the way they discuss issues there.

He was from Paterson. I remember when he jumped out of his seat when the Secretary General of NATO mentioned Paterson, New Jersey. That is exactly who he was. If you came to Paterson, you had to visit the sites where Alexander Hamilton had been. Even though we were doubtful that he had been to all those sites, Bill said he was, so we went to visit.

There were humorous moments. After he came back with a pretty bad diagnosis a couple years ago from a doctor, he said: They told me to stop smoking cigars.

A couple nights later, I saw him smoking a cigar. I said: "Billy, I thought the doctor told you to stop smoking cigars." To which he said: "He did. He died."

You can't make it up here with these people that come to Congress, and that is the joy of being here in a representative democracy.

I worked with him for 16 years on the committee and for 25 years in this House. He was, in so many ways, a reflection of the heart of this committee and this institution that we revere.

In the end, he was beloved by all. He was a regular American, Army veteran, graduate of Fordham University, who represented the good people of Paterson, New Jersey.

He spoke their language, and he fought day after day to better their lives. He said to me once: "I am in the toughest political race of my life."

A couple of days after the election, I said: "What was your vote total?" He said: "I only got 82 percent."

That was him. I admired very much how he leaned into difficult conversa-

tions and complicated issues, and you could depend on him for saying what was on his mind every day.

As I said in The Washington Post obituary, nobody ever walked away from Bill Pascrell and said: I think he is undecided.

He brought a fierce advocacy to what he did. He was fueled by what he believed was his God-given purpose. He was a man of great faith. The righteous fight of doing right for loved ones, constituents, country, and family was part of his DNA. He always fought for fairness. He had the back of the little guy in America.

When he set his eye on something, he was relentless, as difficult with Democrats as he could be with Republicans. People quaked when he took over as Democratic leader of the Subcommittee on Oversight because you knew you could be in for a difficult day. He took that responsibility quite earnestly. He called balls and strikes, and as I said, never once undecided.

When I had the privilege of visiting him in Paterson, I got the full Pascrell special: Police escorts, firefighters lining up to share a drink with him, and a lot of characters along the way.

He certainly was, as we often say, one-of-a-kind, but beloved as only he could be.

We send our deepest condolences to Elsie, his sons, their families, his constituents, and his staff, who are among the most dedicated I have ever noted on Capitol Hill.

Many of his staff are with us this evening, and I notice that his chief, Ben Rich, is here. You have been assured a place in Heaven after working for him for 25 years, I can tell you that. I know there are others in the gallery, as well, but your service to your boss should warrant the same standing that he offered to all of you.

Thanks for sharing this treasure with the Congress and the Nation, and I hope that he will rest peacefully because I am sure he is watching and listening to every word saying: Well, NEAL could have said this or NEAL could have said that, because he was pretty good at not only critiquing, as I said, Republicans, but he reserved time for Democrats, too.

Billy, we miss you. We are going to see you along the way. Paterson lost a great man, and America lost a great friend.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. KELLY for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in remembering the life and legacy of our good friend, our colleague, Mr. Pascrell.

I had the honor of working with Bill over the years as a member of the Ways and Means Committee, and I can tell you that no one brought more passion or more of a presence in our committee room than Mr. Pascrell.

□ 1815

Anyone who has been on the right side or the wrong side of a point of view or opinion that Bill had knows what a tireless advocate he was for the communities that he represented. His life was dedicated to service, from his time in the New Jersey General Assembly, to mayor of his hometown of Paterson, to a senior Member of this House of Representatives.

While he and I certainly did not always see eye to eye on a lot of the policy debates we had in the Ways and Means Committee or here on the floor of the House, Bill was not shy or afraid of working across the aisle to find common cause.

I know I speak for the entire Ways and Means Committee when I say that Bill will be profoundly missed, not just for his passion and friendship but for his knowledge of the issues.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Bill's family and his staff during this difficult time. His service to this Nation and his passion and commitment to those he served will continue to be an example for us all.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DELBENE).

Ms. DELBENE. Madam Speaker, I am honored to be here with all of my colleagues to celebrate the life and legacy of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Madam Speaker, there are those people who stand out, who leave an indelible mark on you. You just hear their name, and you think that voice, the passion, the determination. Bill Pascrell—Billy, as we knew him—was one of those people.

I had the honor of working with him on the Ways and Means Committee and also on his Oversight Subcommittee and calling him a friend and colleague. We worked together on issues from standing up against tax cheats to worker-friendly trade policy.

He was always strong-willed and ready to fight, fight for what he believed in, and we all know he loved a good fight.

He deeply loved his hometown of Paterson, with one t, in New Jersey and was a tireless advocate for his constituents in these Halls.

My thoughts and condolences are also with his family, his incredible staff, and his loved ones. We are all fortunate to share in his memory.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Madam Speaker, I go back with Bill before I was on the Ways and Means Committee. My mom is all Italian, so I got involved with the other dagos here in Congress and would go to the Italian events. That is where I got to meet this feisty gentleman who was all Italian. We were very proud of our Italian heritage, as you could tell.

Here is a guy that, as I got to know him, was one of those you just couldn't take down. It didn't help that his colleagues kept having his ninetieth

birthday for, like, 10 years when he wasn't 90 yet. I thought he was older than he was when I first got to know him, but he was up there. He was up there. I figured by that age—this guy, he just keeps on going—I mean, he must be immune to everything at this time.

Certainly, we were all shocked and saddened when we lost Bill Pascrell. I would hear him pontificating a lot of times, and the chair would often tell him his time had expired. He didn't hear it. If he did, he ignored it. He always had something to say.

You could disagree with whatever he had to say out there, and sometimes you disagreed in the Chamber. Other times, though, you would get in the back and nothing was bitter. You had your conversation.

That is why I considered him a true friend because you could disagree without any personal anger. That is one of the things I loved about him. No matter what the political difference, it could be discussed in the back room, for sure.

We have a common love for our Italian heritage, for sure. I don't do it as much as my forefathers from Italy, but you talk with your hands, and you point with your fingers. I was glad I knew that when I first got on Ways and Means because he was doing that a lot. I took no offense to it because I got it. I know how it works.

Both of us with our Italian heritage, I know that we are both more proud as Americans than anything else but proud of our heritage, as well.

I want to tell a story. We didn't always disagree, right? We agreed a lot. I remember one time I had just stated something, and he followed me and said, I would like to associate myself with the words of the doctor from Ohio.

I went up to him afterward, and I said, Bill, you just got me a primary. Thanks a lot.

Anyway, I really considered him a true friend in agreement and in disagreement, proud to have served with this great American with a long history of being a great American, and as a proud Italian, I am glad to have served with this other Italian-American.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, there have been many great women and men who served in this Congress, walked these Halls, and cast votes on this floor, but today, we are here to reflect on the life and service of one of those great Members, Bill Pascrell.

I had the honor of serving with Bill on the Ways and Means Committee for the 15 years that he served on the committee, and he served recently as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Trade. He always served with incredible passion. In every debate, markup, hearing, and vote, Bill never backed down from doing what he knew was right and what he knew was fair.

In his nearly three decades in Congress, law enforcement and firefighters didn't have a better friend. His constituents couldn't have asked for a better fighter working every day for them.

For Bill, there was no adversary too powerful to challenge. There was no wrong too small to right. When he took on an issue, he left it all on the field. He brought 110 percent to the arena.

Bill was a great husband, father, Army veteran, and schoolteacher. He loved baseball, and he absolutely loved his Italian heritage.

Of course, Bill was a lifelong Patersonian. I have a Navy shipyard in my old district, and we had a Navy ship come in for repairs, and I stopped by to visit with the troops. The captain of that ship was impressed. He said, you are the second Member of Congress that I have met. The first one was my hometown Congressman, and what a great guy.

I said, where are you from? He said, Paterson, New Jersey. I said, Bill Pascrell. He said, absolutely, he was wonderful. The entire community loved him.

They loved him for a long time. A number of my colleagues have mentioned that he served for a long time, and we were all amazed by the tenaciousness and the stay-with-it that Bill had, and I can tell you why. Many times on the floor, he would come to me and say, I learned about a new wine this weekend. What do you know about it? He would tell me the name of the winery.

Case in point here, those long, strong years, it is good to know that a good glass of wine will keep you healthy for a long time.

To Bill's wife, his three kids, and his six grandchildren, we all thank them for sharing Bill with us and with the country that he loved so much.

To Ben and the rest of Bill's team, we thank them for all they did. They are so lucky to have been able to share that time with just a great guy.

Bill, thank you for your fierce commitment to public service. You are dearly missed.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), probably one of Bill's best friends in all of Congress.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. NEAL for putting this together. Mr. KELLY knows how much he loved him, and I think it is a great tribute.

I want to start by saying that we are having a planning meeting because we are going to do a longer memorial, and I thank Mr. NEAL and Mr. SMITH. We hope to do it in the Ways and Means Committee room and talk about his legislation and his work that is, in and of itself, a pretty good list and legacy to be remembered by. This evening, though, I want to talk about the man.

First and foremost, our hearts go out to Elsie, David, and Glenn. I am in touch with Bill III regularly, talking about his father.

Some of you know this story, but Bill III was actually flying out to the Democratic convention because his father asked him to, to tell everybody that he was okay and was returning. He felt bad that he wasn't at his father's side. I said, Bill, that is what your father wanted you to do.

That is the kind of guy Bill Pascrell was, but I don't think anyone described him better than Monsignor Silva and the relationship that he had with the monsignor in his parish in Paterson, New Jersey.

After all, they told me that there was a death that took place of a dear friend of theirs, and Bill was going to give the keynote. Father said, yes, Bill, but make sure—the mass is at 8. He said, yes, don't worry. I will be there.

About 10 till 8, Father gets a call, and it is Bill Pascrell. He says, Father, you have to postpone the mass for a half hour. I am running behind.

He said, Bill, I can't postpone a mass like this. He said, what do you mean, you can't do that? What kind of authority do you have?

He was arguing with the priest, and the priest said he argued for about 20 minutes, so they were able to start the mass about 5 minutes late, and they were able to pull it off. That is Bill Pascrell.

Bill Pascrell lived in Hill House, where a lot of us started off. I was his next-door neighbor. JAN SCHAKOWSKY was across the hall. RICHIE was upstairs.

I said, Billy, what are you doing? I hear a lot of noise over there in your room. He said, you know, those Republicans are right across the way from me?

I said, no, I never really thought about that. He said, well, they are. I said, well, what do you about it? He said, I will tell you what I do about it. You know what I do? I open my blinds every morning, go to the window, and I put a pressed ham up against the window and moon them every single morning.

That is Bill Pascrell, the guy that we know and love, the same guy in the story at the Swedish Embassy, where there was an elegant event, an affair. All these dignitaries are there, and they bring out very fancified hors d'oeuvres, and then they highlight it all by bringing out their delicacy, Swedish meatballs.

They bring them, and unfortunately, they set them down in front of Bill Pascrell, and he said, you call these meatballs? These are not meatballs. These little dinky things, who would possibly eat them?

He is insulting all of Sweden, but they ended up laughing with him, et cetera. That was our guy, Bill Pascrell.

These characters behind me, this is a picture from our bocce tournament. Both Mike Doyle and Mike Capuano could get under his skin very easily.

As you know, Bill was from New Jersey, and Mike Capuano would routinely say to him, Billy, if you had any guts—

you are such a big shot. You are always mouthing off about New York and everything.

If New Jersey had any nerve, why don't you call them the New Jersey Giants? That is where the stadium is. It is in New Jersey, but you guys don't have the nerve in New Jersey to stand up.

What is wrong with you and people in New Jersey? You are weak-kneed. If you were from Boston, you would have a lot more to say.

That would, of course, set Pascrell off like you can't believe.

□ 1830

I miss him dearly, as I know everyone here does. There are so many Bill Pascrell stories to tell, and hopefully we will have the time to do that at another event.

Again, as Father Sylva said, and I think he really knew Bill, he said: When you saw Bill and you saw the anger in him, he said it was a justified anger. It wasn't an anger of hatred. It was an anger about what he saw was wrong in the world and how he would change it.

The Father went on to explain that anger and courage are twin sisters. Along with the anger about what is wrong comes the courage, and that is what Bill Pascrell had, too, to want to step in and make a difference. From the General Assembly, to mayor of Paterson, to the United States Congress, that is who our guy was. That is why we love him and miss him so much.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE). I think all of us could speak for an hour tonight about Billy. I just want to make sure. We will start talking about how much time we are allotting, but that doesn't mean anybody is going to follow it, in true Pascrell fashion. Mr. MOORE.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Madam Speaker, as a newer voice on the committee, I didn't even get to serve a full term with Mr. Pascrell, so I will be lighter on stories than others, but the amount of impact he had on me will carry on for my time in Congress.

I have no prepared remarks, and I can't think of a better way to honor Mr. Pascrell than to have no prepared remarks. I can't say whether or not he actually ever had prepared remarks. All I knew was that we were going to get yelled at.

I make a spotlight of a Member in my weekly newsletter. Oftentimes, I think the wrong Members don't get highlighted enough back here, and we don't get a chance for the people of the First District to know who in the world is back in Congress. We oftentimes only hear of certain folks that sort of dominate the airwaves.

In my newsletter, I wrote just a very brief spotlight when I learned of his passing, and it said: The only thing bigger than Bill's heart and his personality, and I guess I could add voice to

that as well, but the only thing bigger than his personality and his heart was his sense of humor. It carried a lot of the way with us.

I know that we on the Republican side of the dais always appreciated his sense of humor, so much so that I would get caught in a vicious cycle every once in a while where he would—everything he did to me was always with a little bit of a tinge of humor. I can admit that now that he has passed on because I would have been scared to otherwise.

If he said something, I would have to chuckle, and then during the committee hearing he would yell at me for laughing, which only made me almost want to laugh more because I knew in 6 minutes when I saw him in the back room he would be one of my best friends back here. I knew that was the way he reacted.

It didn't mean he wasn't serious about his issues. It just means he cared about people's interactions and personalities. I always knew where to find him. I just thought about that. Of course, as I poked my head up and looked back in the area where he would always be sitting if I ever needed a quick chat, you see those flowers there. It was a neat thing.

Again, very, very little time, but what I do know that I think is important to recognize about this place, and what it needs more of—the gentleman from Connecticut addressed this just recently, you could tell he was his best friend. That was just mentioned about him, and I assumed that was always the case—but he went around to every one of us, making sure we were going to be at his birthday party. I can say now that he has passed on that I am so glad of the persistence of Mr. LARSON to push us because I learned, and I got more of a take into his own life and the amount of service that he did and what he did for his community through that event, and I will always be appreciative of that.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Butler's courtesy. It was my pleasure to sit next to Bill Pascrell for 16 years. We came to Congress at the same time. We entered the Ways and Means Committee at the same time, and he was right there every step of the way.

We have these special moments, learning more about our colleagues. Who knew that he had a master's degree in philosophy? You think about it, it is not unrealistic. I appreciated JOHN LARSON's three times a year celebrating the 10th anniversary of his 90th birthday, and the way that Bill took it in stride and brought people together. He was playing baseball well into his 60s with energy.

People talk sometimes about Bill being angry. I don't think so. It was passion. He carried a spark of passion for people he cared about, for issues he

cared about—the unformed firefighters, police officers. He had deep concern for people who had suffered traumatic brain injury.

He had, obviously, special interests. We found out a lot about trade and Donald Trump, but he added a human dimension that is too often lacking here. I will cherish those memories sitting next to Bill.

Ben, those times when you couldn't quite contain him as he would reveal that passion and get things going, but it adds a dimension to this institution that at times is lacking, the human nature. I know the chairman has endless stories about his experience here.

Bill Pascrell is a chapter all by himself, and I feel privileged to have served with him and appreciate people coming together to reflect on his legacy and his memory. Thank you very much.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS, so many people want to talk about Bill, nobody can say enough about him in just 3 minutes. I wish we had a whole day, but we are going to run short of time.

Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. DAVIS, you are recognized, sir.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. KELLY. I am pleased to join with all my colleagues as we recall, remember, and reflect one of the most profound individuals who has ever served in the House of Representatives.

Can you imagine what it would be like to sit between LINDA SANCHEZ and Bill Pascrell for 12 years or more? One side, the other side.

Bill had all of the attributes of a great teacher, and that is great teachers learn how to use theater, humor, and profound knowledge to hold the attention of whatever it is that they are trying to reach. You never had to worry about people listening to Bill Pascrell, and you never had to wonder where he stood or where he was going or where he had been. It was just great for me to sit there and drink from the fountain.

I would listen to Bill, and that would often give me a little bit of direction in terms of where I wanted to go. It was an honor, a pleasure, and a great joy to be his seat mate.

To his family, to his staff, I would see the staff come and bring him notes. He would look at the note and then ball it up, and hold it in his hand because he knew what he was going to say. He knew what he was going to do, and that is what he did.

Great guy. Great pal, Bill Pascrell.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Madam Speaker, this evening we are honoring a remarkable colleague and a dear friend, Congressman Bill Pascrell. A quintessential

New Jersey politician, I think he really exemplified the grit and the determination that really defines his working-class hometown of Paterson, New Jersey.

He was such a champion for his constituents, and he never backed away from a fight if he thought that the cause was good and just.

Some might call Bill brash, blunt, and feisty maybe. All of those were true, but those words only tell a part of the story because he was also profoundly kind and a dear and caring person to others, and somebody that I really consider myself fortunate to have known and to have learned under as a Member of Congress.

Our friendship was a little unlikely, the New Jersey grandson of Italian immigrants and the California daughter of Mexican immigrants. Although our worlds were thousands of miles apart, we quickly discovered that we had much in common.

Bill and I most famously bonded over our love of baseball. He participated in the Congressional Baseball Game every year that he was in office, either as a player or later as a coach. Every year you could find him in the dugout or prowling the first baseline in his trademark Fordham baseball jersey. He was our batting coach, and his batting tips were legendary: "Hit the back of the ball, guys, hit the back of the ball." Now, none of us really knew what that meant, but we all tried.

It is only fitting that one of the last times I saw him was at this year's game. He was in the dugout helping me coach our team, which was exactly where he wanted to be, and I know that our dugout is going to be a little emptier next year without Silky there to fill that void.

Baseball is really only where our friendship began. Shortly after I joined the Ways and Means Committee, I moved up and got to sit near to him. As Mr. DAVIS said, Billy was two seats up. For years, I had a front-row seat to seeing him fight tirelessly for working-class people.

Bill could work himself up into a lather, and when he did that, our chairman, RICHIE NEAL, would look over at me and give me the look, like, hey, LINDA, you have got to rein him in. He expected me to babysit Bill Pascrell. If anybody knows anything, you can't control that man.

He was such a champion, whether it was advocating for affordable healthcare or protecting Social Security or pushing for more support for our firefighters and first responders, Bill never lost sight of where he came from or why he was there and why he served.

Few people can really match his legacy of public service. He was a sergeant, a teacher, an assemblyman, a mayor, and a Congressman. His life, I think, is a real testament to the difference that one person can make when they are driven by a deep sense of community and compassion.

As we remember Congressman Pascrell, let's honor his legacy by continuing to fight for the values that he championed—justice, equity, and an unwavering support for those who need it the most. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, just in courtesy, there are so many guys who want to speak, honestly, RICHIE, we could be here all week and never get enough said. We are not really clocking it the way we should, and I am taking up too much time right now. I want you all to have a chance to talk.

I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), a close friend of Mr. Pascrell's.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I will be uncharacteristically brief.

This is tough. We all come here to do the hard work of representing our districts. I don't think a lot of folks understand that one of the things that makes this often difficult job tolerable in some ways and actually sometimes even enjoyable are the relationships that we develop with one another. It doesn't mean we agree on everything.

When I first got here 12 years ago, I got to know Billy right away because I was a member of that baseball team. I, too, am still trying to figure out how I am supposed to hit the back of the ball. I didn't know that a ball had a front or back or sides—it is round—but Billy was convinced that we had to hit the back of that ball, and I am going to keep working on that one.

□ 1845

Then I joined the Ways and Means Committee. We spent a lot of time together on the Ways and Means Committee, and I got to know him in a different way.

I won't tell the whole story—maybe the ranking member might at some point—but one particular moment that I will keep with me for a long time was when a few of us traveled to Mexico City to meet with the President of Mexico in the late hours of the USMCA negotiation.

Without getting into the details, let me just say that the experience that we have all had with Bill Pascrell is now an experience that the President of Mexico also had. It was a moment to watch. I will keep that with me for as long as I live.

I am glad that I was able to spend so much time with him at the Democratic Club. I must have had I don't know how many hundred dinners with Billy, often hoping there would be a handful of other Members around, but on those few occasions when I showed up and it was just Bill sitting there and I was able to sit with him and have a drink or two and enjoy dinner with him, I got to know him.

Lastly, I guess the real testament of his goodness, you know, earlier this year my family suffered a terrible tragedy. Bill Pascrell called me. In those early days, he called me every single day. I am sure he pulled out that flip

phone and dialed my number, and he called me every day just to check on me. He said to me—and I have one of those voicemails where he said: DANNY, whatever you need, and I mean it. And I know he meant it.

He was a friend. He was a colleague. He was a fighter for his people. He was a poet. I hope someday we publish some of that poetry. He was just a good guy, and I really will miss him.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT).

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, I may have a slightly different experience. Bill was my senior Democrat for my subcommittee. You actually could not stop yourself from at least liking him because he was just brutally honest with you. He would say: DAVID, I really think that is stupid, or on occasion, which was actually joyful: DAVID, we can make that work.

Why this is important is so, often particularly in the Ways and Means Committee, which I still believe is culturally a unique committee—you know, we are tough on each other, but I think actually we are sort of intellectually fair. A number of the oversight hearings we have had even this year, they weren't adversarial.

Something that is important that I want to make sure I say before I ramble on too much, Bill's staff really should get some special kudos because even when you could tell he wasn't feeling well, when he was sort of in angst, his staff did a remarkable job of keeping an eye out on him, keeping him ready to go because you always knew, no matter what you said, he had an answer to it.

It was really a neat experience, as this is the first time I have chaired something in Ways and Means, to have my counterpart be someone with that history who was tough as nails on me. When he thought I was doing something fair for working men and women, he was all in with me. He wanted to move forward. When he wasn't happy with it, yes, he would beat the crap out of you.

Actually, in a weird way he epitomized what, in my mind, was the classic defender of working-class Americans. He is the image I have in my head because that is what he was.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER).

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Madam Speaker, we are gathered tonight as the Ways and Means family to honor the memory of our friend and colleague, Bill Pascrell.

Bill was a giant. He was a fighter. He was a champion. He was a mentor. He was our friend. He cared about each and every one of us just as he cared about each and every one of his constituents.

What we know about Bill is he was caring. He was passionate. He was tenacious. He was funny. He was tough. He was honest. He was sometimes loud, but he was always, always beloved.

Bill loved his own hometown of Paterson, New Jersey—Paterson with one T. He loved the people he represented. He loved this House—the House, not so much the Senate. He loved every one of us, and we loved him.

In his absence, I suspect we are likely to ask a question that not one of us ever had to ask while he was alive. We will find ourselves asking: I wonder what Bill Pascrell would think about this?

Bill always spoke his mind, and he always spoke his heart. His heart was always with the people of his hometown of Paterson and always with the best interests of the United States.

We will miss Bill.

We will forever remember Bill.

May his memory be a blessing for his wife, his three kids, and his six grandchildren, for all of us who worked with him, and for our great Nation.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. GOMEZ).

Mr. GOMEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise in memory of Bill Pascrell. When we talk about the people's House, he epitomized that saying, that the idea that anybody from any part of our country could rise up to represent their community, their constituents in a way that does honor to them but also to the idea of we the people, that the consent is earned from the governed, and Billy was the epitome of that idea.

When I think of him, I think that he was a character, that he was a fighter, that there would never be another Bill Pascrell in this place. He was one of a kind, but he also had a kind soul. He was a hell of a fighter and somebody that didn't give up on working America.

How does this help the working man and woman in his district and across the country?

One of the first things I did when I was on the committee when I was really green is I called out another Member on the other side of the aisle by name and took a good whack because I came from the Oversight Committee, and that is how we do it over there. We kind of have brass-knuckle fights. I was asked—which kind broke decorum a little bit—but I was asked to make amends with the other gentleman, which I did, but when I left, a few days after that incident Billy said: You did a great job in that hearing. He loved those fights because he felt that passion.

Billy is somebody that is going to be missed, but I know that his legacy in this place and in his district will never be forgotten.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, (Mr. BOYLE).

Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my fellow Pennsylvanian, Mr. KELLY, for yielding me time, and I thank Chairman NEAL and the staff and everyone

who put this together. I offer my personal condolences to all of the Pascrell staff.

This has truly been a wonderful evening, and for anyone who may be at home watching on C-SPAN, I hope it gives you actually a taste of a part of the House of Representatives culture that you may not see, and you certainly don't see on cable TV news. There is a lot more heart and soul to this place than sometimes meets the eye.

Billy was about a 70-mile drive up the New Jersey Turnpike from where I live in Philadelphia, but in so many ways we were from the same neighborhood. While Bill was one of a kind, there are many people similar to Billy in my community, that is for sure. We spoke the same language.

I think tonight, if you didn't know Mr. Pascrell, if you didn't know Billy, you are getting a flavor for who he was, and truly, he was a character. But don't let that obscure this fact: He was a character with character. He had a lot of heart, a lot of tenacity. He knew who he was. He knew who he was fighting for. He was truly a special person.

It might sound odd to say about an 87-year-old, but I am still in shock that he is actually gone. I have been here 10 years. I often sat next to or near Billy. This place is not the same now that he is gone. Somewhere up in the sky he is getting ready to celebrate another 90th birthday party, except instead of with JOHN LARSON and the rest of us, it is with Saint Peter.

I just know that this place is better for the fact that Billy Pascrell served.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI).

Mr. SUOZZI. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. KELLY for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am surprised nobody mentioned Billy's stamina. He could keep going and going and going. We would spend time with him, and the next day he would be going just as strong as ever. He was a remarkable guy.

The death of Bill Pascrell and his absence from the Chamber could really represent the beginning of the end of an era. In this day and age of hyperbole and histrionics, in this time of performance politics without accomplishing things, Bill Pascrell's attitude of get something done for the people we serve will be sorely missed.

Don't get me wrong. As we heard from everybody here tonight, Bill was a performer. He loved to sing. He loved to read poetry, write poetry. His out-sized personality and his in-your-face attitude were very memorable, but Bill would always focus on getting things done for his constituents.

There is an old Italian expression: "Guarda le mani, non ascoltare la bocca." "Watch the hands, don't listen to the mouth." Bill's hands got a lot of things done for a lot of people.

I was lucky to have a great relationship with Bill, despite only serving in

Congress for less than 7 years and he for 28 years, but we immediately bonded over our shared Italian heritage, our shared experience as small-town mayors, our shared alma mater of Fordham, our shared advocacy for labor, law enforcement, and most publicly, our shared advocacy for the restoration of the State and local tax deduction.

As a result, he was always more generous to me than I deserved. I loved Bill Pascrell. He always reminded me of the old-school political leaders in my family and from my hometown.

As the demographics of his district changed over the 28 years since he served as mayor to this day, today in Congress, he still won all of his primaries and all of his general elections overwhelmingly because his constituents would always "guarda le mani," "watch the hands" and what he got done for the people. He always worked for the people.

Rest well, good and faithful servant.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me for the privilege of saying a few words about Bill Pascrell.

I love Bill Pascrell. I say that in the present tense because every time I think of him he makes me smile, not because he was a funny guy—oh, no, he was serious. He was intense. He is the most honest, and I am going to have to say he did not have a phony bone in his body.

□ 1900

I was a neighbor of his at Hill House, and I would see him sometimes coming and going. One time when JOHN LARSON and I knocked on his door, he opened that door and I guess to describe what he was wearing or not wearing, I will say shorts, but he didn't flinch. I didn't flinch. I was happy to see him, and he didn't care because he is his natural self.

Let me just say that honesty and clarity was what he was about. There was nothing that was contrived about this man. There aren't that many people who I know that I could say that about.

I miss him so much. I think about him every day, and I am honored to say I loved him.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks.

We have some time remaining, but there is nobody closer to Billy than Mr. NEAL.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL).

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, the public doesn't oftentimes get to see this part of Congress where Republicans and Democrats come together to honor a true friend on days on which we agreed and disagreed, but I think JAN SCHAKOWSKY summed up the earnestness of our pal and TOM SUOZZI, as well,

in describing the sincerity of Bill Pascrell.

As we close out this memoriam to him tonight, my memories of him will always be with his Frank Sinatra coat on that sparkled. He loved the Sinatra song, "The Summer Wind," a glass of red wine, and a good cigar. Nobody could say *al dente* the way that he did with food.

If you were out with him in a restaurant, he would share with the waiter the quality of the food and sometimes go back into his favorite restaurant, La Perla, to give them advice on how the pasta should be made.

He was really proud of being Italian. He spoke parts of the language, and as noted here, poetry. He was well-read, he read everything. Sometimes you would not have thought of that as he eviscerated somebody he didn't like and then call them a friend 15 minutes later.

I call attention because I do think that during my time here in the Congress there are fewer people like Bill Pascrell, and I think we can lament that as a fact. I think that there was nothing about him that was performative, there was nothing about him that was theater, and he never thought that for 1 minute his job was to entertain the American people. He thought his job was to inform them and from time to time criticize them if they didn't see things the way that he saw them.

Again, to those who might be watching, thanks to MIKE KELLY for helping us to organize this event with the understanding that the public doesn't often see this part of Congress where we honor a cherished friend who every single day came to work to do what he thought was in the best interests of the American people.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, at this point, it is when you reach a certain age it is never a goodbye, it is just until we meet again, and that is truly the case here with Billy. This was truly a great night talking about a great man who was a great friend.

With that, that will end for tonight, but it will never ever end the memories we have of Bill Pascrell. God bless.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

WILDFIRE FIREFIGHTER PAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. SCHRIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I just want to say that I am really honored to be here today to talk about wildfires and our firefighters, how noble they are, how much support they need, and how grateful we are to them. That is why we are devoting this hour to the topic of wildfires.

Let me just start by thanking our brave firefighters and first responders for the work they do to keep us safe in all sorts of emergencies.

The last few years in Washington State and, frankly, the whole West of the United States have shown that as climate change accelerates making for hotter days and weakened trees in overcrowded forests, so does the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

All across the West, we are seeing wildfires that have grown in intensity and frequency, and our State has some of the highest risk of what we call firehedges in the entire country.

We have all felt the impact of wildfires through the damage they have caused in our communities, the smoke in the air that we all breathe and choke on every summer, and for some of us, our homes. This is especially true in places like Stehekin and Lake Chelan where the Pioneer fire just burnt for months in my district, threatening an entire community and causing evacuations. I am so grateful to the firefighters on the ground in Lake Chelan who worked tirelessly and put themselves at risk to stop the spread of that devastating fire wherever they could and to protect the residents who needed to be evacuated.

Because wildfires are an ever-increasing threat, I worked in Congress with Members of both parties to address this issue. I will talk about a couple of examples.

In Congress I am proud to have recently introduced the National Prescribed Fire Act. I introduced this bipartisan, bicameral bill along with Senator RON WYDEN from Oregon and DAVID VALADAO from California. This legislation would invest in hazardous fuels management, including prescribed fire, which is an effective, underutilized method of forest management that helps to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires and choking on smoke in the summer.

More specifically, this bill would authorize \$300 million in total for the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to plan, prepare, and conduct prescribed burns on Federal, State, and private lands.

It would require the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to increase the number of acres treated each year with prescribed fire.

It would establish a \$10 million collaborative program based on the successful collaborative forest landscape restoration program to implement prescribed burns on county, State, and private land at high risk of burning in a wildfire.

This bill would also establish a workforce development program at the For-

est Service and the Department of the Interior to develop, train, and hire prescribed fire practitioners, because not all firefighters do this. It would establish employment programs for Tribes, for veterans, for women, and for those formerly incarcerated.

It would also require State air quality agencies to use current and often more relaxed, as in our State of Washington, Federal laws and regulations to allow larger prescribed burns and give States a bit more flexibility in the winter months when there is low risk of catastrophic fire to conduct these prescribed burns that reduce the risk of choking on smoke all summer.

It would also prescribe direction for setting clear standards for prescribed fire practitioner liability and studying the merits of a claims fund to aid with cross-jurisdictional wildfire efforts.

I have also worked on some other legislation that goes hand in hand with this.

One is the Forest Data Modernization Act.

This bill simply lets us know data about our forests and which ones are at the highest risk for catastrophic fire. I have also voted for landmark legislation like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which incorporated many elements of the previously discussed National Prescribed Fire Act, like historic investments to remove underbrush and use prescribed fire to reduce these risks of catastrophic wildfire.

As an achievement in my own district, just last year the Kittitas County Conservation District received \$10 million through these infrastructure funds.

Investments like this in firehedges like those in my district make tangible differences and allow communities throughout the Eighth District to be better prepared for wildfires.

However, I have to say that even with these steps, wildfires are a reality now and in the future that we are going to have to grapple with. I also want to note that in addition to doing prevention, we have a shortage of these first responders, both career and volunteer firefighters, right now. They are our heroes, and we need to take care of them the way that they take care of us.

That is why I voted for several bills to increase firefighter pay and benefits to make firefighting a year-round job and to get grants to local fire departments so that they can hire and retain new firefighters.

Wildfires aren't just an issue east of the Cascades in Washington State anymore, a notoriously wet State west of the Cascades, we are seeing these fires in the wet part of our State, including in Olympic National Forest which is a rain forest.

So I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to push forward meaningful legislation that will keep the Eighth District and the entire Western United States safe.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr.