

He successfully lobbied for a bill in Illinois that made driver's licenses available to individuals regardless of immigration status. He worked with the Illinois Business Immigration Coalition where he collaborated with business leaders to persuade elected officials to support immigration reform, creating a bipartisan base of support.

In 2016, he became the first senator based overseas in the Irish Senate after his appointment by Enda Kenny, then Ireland's Taoiseach, giving a voice to the Irish diaspora that enriches every corner of our diverse Nation.

His businesses and restaurants live at the center of Chicago's hospitality industry, and his legacy of fighting for immigration reform continues to have ripple effects throughout the Nation.

I am grateful for our years of friendship, strengthened by our shared commitment to our Irish culture.

While serving as a senator, our Buffalo Irish community welcomed Billy and Anne to see how we honored and lived our shared heritage. We visited the James Joyce Collection at the University at Buffalo, a literary treasure honoring the Irish novelist, and many Irish monuments in Buffalo, including the Fenian Invasion Monument and the Western New York Irish Famine Memorial.

I join the long list of those inspired and heartened by his compassion and dedication, which he used to make his community and our country a better place.

Billy Lawless was a consummate gentleman, a visionary, and a brilliant international leader.

He leaves behind his wife, Anne; his four children, Amy, Clodagh, Billy Jr., and John Paul; and his eight grandchildren.

May Senator Billy Lawless rest in peace and may his vision for ever-closer ties between the United States and Ireland continue to flourish.

PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP'S CABINET APPOINTMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, this week, I came back to Washington with the idea of trying to give President Trump a chance, an open mind, hold my tongue a bit. It has been difficult, and it will get more difficult, it appears.

I first got inspired to get into government because of John Kennedy. I knew every single one of John Kennedy's Cabinet members. They are referred to in a book as the best and the brightest. That is what we used to have in our Cabinet of the United States of America was the best and the brightest.

What we have seen with the nominations that have come forth and the request for changes in the Senate's confirmation policy really is scary and should be of concern to the American people. It is a red light on the possibility of loss of democracy and the im-

plementation and institution of autocracy.

Mr. Trump asked the Senate leadership to give him a 2-week period where he could make Senate recess appointments, something that is permitted in the Constitution but was permitted because of the idea that back when they wrote the Constitution, if the Senate took a recess, it could take weeks or months before they could all get back to Washington by trains or horses, or however they traveled back in those days, in the late 1700s, to conduct business.

That is not the case anymore. The Supreme Court has ruled in a case about 10, 15 years ago that—I think it was Justice Scalia who was the lead on the Court—this should only take place in intersession, between the times the Senate ends a term and begins a new term, and that is simply whenever they decide to take off.

President Trump has asked. Senate leaders, candidates, and the Senate leader who was chosen, Mr. THUNE, all said they would do it when Mr. Trump asked them to do it, to have a period where he could have his appointments for Cabinet to come forward and be approved because of lack of action by the Senate in what is called a recess appointment. That is a dereliction of the Constitution, and anybody that goes along with it should be questioned.

The Senate is to act as a check and balance on the President and his nominations and appointments of Cabinet members. The Senate meets, has hearings, and votes to confirm or not to confirm nominees.

To not have hearings, to not have votes because at least some of his Cabinet recommendations are so abhorrent that they would scare the American people, and have a spectacle of bringing forth the facts about their backgrounds, lack of experience, and the lack of character that they have shown in their times in government and life here on this planet—to not have hearings and to not have votes is a dereliction and an offense to the Constitution that has the Senate as a check and balance before nominees are approved.

The worst was yesterday when Matt Gaetz was recommended for Attorney General. After his recommendation, and he flew back and forth to Washington with President-elect Trump, he announced his resignation from this body. By so doing, he thwarted an ethics investigation that has been going on in the House Ethics Committee concerning alleged conduct that he had had with a 17-year-old girl, sexual conduct, his involvement in activities using illegal drugs, use of his congressional powers for the benefit of people illegally, use of campaign funds for personal activities, and other offenses that would call for the expulsion of a person from this House.

By his resigning from the House, that investigation ends because the Committee no longer has jurisdiction over him. He will become a nominee for At-

torney General to go through the recess process where all of these facts won't come forth.

I would hope that our Ethics Committee and the chair of the Ethics Committee, who has done a great job on other occasions, and I have great respect for, would release the results of that study to the American public because they should see it. They should see the work that has been done, and they should see the type of person who is going to be brought up for Attorney General of the United States, even if the Senate doesn't want to bring it forth with hearings.

As I understand it, the report would be eye-opening and extremely damaging and should be released to the American public. They have a right to see it.

The recommendation of Tulsi Gabbard to be the head of intelligence, when she has mostly been known for controversial statements supporting our foes around the world, from Syria to Russia to Iran, is disturbing and challenging.

The suggestion that the Department of Defense should be led by the host of Fox & Friends on weekends, as his main contribution to society, is scary to our soldiers, who need the best and brightest at the helm.

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MOURNING THE LOSS OF VERNON LEON DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of Vernon Leon Davis. Leon Davis was a firefighter for over 30 years in Blackshear, Georgia.

Mr. Davis worked his way up to assistant fire chief of Blackshear while working part time over his expansive 30-year career.

Sadly, Mr. Davis passed in the line of duty while helping the Blackshear community during Hurricane Helene. This hurricane has hit Georgia and the Southeast region of the United States hard. Without the tremendous efforts and service of people like Mr. Davis, our communities would not be able to recover.

Mr. Davis was known to be an exceptional man by his family, friends, and all the people he worked with throughout his career. He has deeply touched the Blackshear community and will be greatly missed by many.

Our community is forever indebted to Mr. Davis' service, and I send my deepest condolences to his family and friends.

CELEBRATING HOWARD YOUNG'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Howard Young's 100th birthday.

Born on November 25, 1924, in Louisiana, Howard Young has lived an incredible life. Howard grew up in Louisiana during the toughest of times,

the Great Depression, and those experiences shaped Howard for the rest of his life. His upbringing instilled in him a love for his church, hard work, and helping those in need.

At 17, Howard joined the Navy and served our Nation in the Pacific theater in World War II. After his service, he left the Navy and moved to Houston where he entered college.

Even after his retirement at 58, Howard is well-known throughout the community for his busy schedule of volunteering for organizations, including the United Way, the Alzheimer's Association, his church, the VA, and many more.

Howard is also a local celebrity in the GOP and often quips that he became a Republican after Governor Huey Long levied taxes on food during his childhood in Louisiana.

Today, I ask that we all come together to celebrate this great man and congratulate him on 100 years of a young life.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF EDWARD H. ZIPPERER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of Ed Zipperer. Ed was born in Savannah, Georgia, on August 8, 1931, where he grew up working on his family's vegetable farm along Highway 17.

Ed attended Savannah High School where he was a standout in football. He then played at Clemson University before earning an agricultural engineering degree from the University of Georgia.

He went on to coach basketball in 1965, forming one of the few racially integrated teams in the State. For games on the road, Ed even bought a hot dog machine to feed his team.

Ed continued making a difference in his community by serving in the State senate from 1967 to 1975.

Ed was instrumental in creating the Skidaway Island State Park, Fort McAllister State Park, and Kings Ferry Ogeechee River public recreational area. His dedication has helped to preserve land in south Georgia for generations to come.

Additionally, Ed was the president of Chatham County Farm Bureau for 45 years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we take a moment to mourn Ed Zipperer and thank him for his life of service that will always be remembered by the people of south Georgia.

CELEBRATING THE WORK OF GERALD "JERRY" COURI

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the work of Gerald "Jerry" Couri, the now former GOP deputy chief counsel for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on the Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials.

Jerry's impressive tenure in the House of Representatives began before me and several of my colleagues here today, during the 101st Congress.

After graduating from Marquette University, Jerry worked for Representatives Scott Klug and Paul

Gillmor, handling environmental issues related to the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. Couri then served on the committee for 23 years, specializing in chemical management and playing a large role in rewriting the Toxic Substances Control Act.

While we honor Jerry's dedication to the committee for all these years, we recognize nothing surpasses his love for Marquette basketball and his lovely wife and children.

On behalf of my office and the committee, I thank Jerry for his faithful service to the committee and the U.S. House of Representatives.

We wish Jerry the best in his next endeavors.

HONORING THE BRAVE FIRE CREWS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RYAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and thank the brave fire crews who are battling the outbreak of wildfires that are currently devastating the Hudson Valley, centered in Greenwood Lake, Warwick, parts of western Ulster County, and have now spread into New Jersey, as well.

Undaunted by the great personal peril they are facing, these heroes are willingly putting their own lives on the line to protect our neighbors and our communities.

Each and every member of our fire and emergency response crews is saving lives, and I thank them. Their every action has spared families and property from heartbreak. They are preserving our Hudson Valley as our cherished home. I thank them for their unparalleled selflessness.

I also thank Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus and his entire fire services and emergency management team for their around-the-clock, 24/7 work in regard to protecting the safety of our community.

We have also seen an outpouring of support from throughout the entire region across multiple States. Firefighters traveling in from across the Northeast see our community in need and are answering the call to help.

They are putting their own lives at risk to protect communities that aren't even their own communities.

I recognize the profound service, sacrifice, and life of one of those very heroes.

Daniel Vasquez was an 18-year-old State Parks aide from neighboring Ramapo in Rockland County who just a few days ago laid down his own life at the age of 18 to protect our Greenwood Lake community from the catastrophic fire raging in Sterling Forest.

Daniel was truly the best of what the Hudson Valley is: hardworking, genuine, compassionate, and a reliable shoulder to lean on for anyone and everyone who needed one. He was widely known throughout the region for his

prowess and power on the baseball field as the captain of his high school baseball team. He was even more widely known for the limitless friendship and brotherhood he extended to every person he met.

I join the entire Hudson Valley in mourning the tragic loss of such a young, bright life. I send my deepest condolences to his family and friends and my thanks. We are forever indebted to him in our community for his unwavering bravery and heroism.

To all those in our community who are facing unimaginable loss, the Hudson Valley takes care of each other, leans on each other, and carries each other through anything. This has been true for centuries of our history, it remains true today, and I am confident it will be true for many more to come.

My thoughts are with those facing such loss and with our fire crews who still at this moment throughout all last night and into this morning are putting their lives on the line while wildfires are still raging.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JOHN LODGE STONEMAN

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of World War I veteran John Lodge Stoneman who was finally given a proper burial at our brand new Ulster County Veterans Cemetery last Thursday, November 7, more than 62 years after his passing.

In 1917, John courageously answered his Nation's call to service as the U.S. entered the Great War. He put his life on the line for years, and our Nation and our community owe him a debt of gratitude we can never repay.

His legacy deserves the absolute highest place of reverence and honor, but, unfortunately, his remains for over 61 years had remained unclaimed since his passing in 1962. Through tireless efforts, Wiltwyck Cemetery volunteer Kathy Wade pieced together the story of John's entire life. I am so grateful that my office and team were able to help assist her in obtaining his military records so he could finally receive, decades later, the honorable burial he was long overdue.

I thank Kathy and the countless other community members who made it their mission to lay Mr. Stoneman in his final resting place, especially our great Ulster County Veteran Services Agency, our Ulster County Sheriff's Department, the Patriot Guard Riders, the VFW, and The American Legion, who all worked together from across our community.

Thanks to their work, John Lodge Stoneman will now rest alongside his fellow heroes and ensure his place in American history is recognized for years to come.

ST. MICHAEL'S ACADEMY, A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BEAN) for 5 minutes.