

Lombard's family, I am suspending my efforts to rename the post office, as we decided that the Algiers Ferry Terminal would be more suitable for this tribute.

This terminal, at the foot of Canal Street in New Orleans, is where Dr. Rudy Lombard likely embarked on many of his direct actions to fight for civil rights. As a native of Algiers, I can think of no better tribute for a man who dedicated his life to justice, equality, and the people of New Orleans.

Dr. Rudy Lombard was a civil rights hero. Born in Algiers in 1939, he grew up confronting the harsh realities of racial discrimination, a challenge that would shape his path as a relentless activist.

His courage shone brightly as a college student at Xavier University, where he led the now-legendary sit-in against segregation at McCrory's Five-and-Dime, alongside the CORE Four, Lanny Goldfinch, Cecil Carter, Jr., and Oretta Castle. His brave actions helped dismantle the framework of injustice, culminating in the landmark Supreme Court victory.

Naming the Algiers Ferry Terminal after Dr. Lombard would not only honor his legacy but will also serve as a constant reminder of the power of collective action.

The ferry has been a vital part of Algiers, connecting communities and enabling access. I implore the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority to take this action so it will connect us with the values of Dr. Rudy Lombard and those things that he embodied: equity, courage, and progress.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL CURT POWELL

(Ms. McCLELLAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. McCLELLAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the lifetime of service of one of my constituents, Lieutenant Colonel Curt Powell, who was the 2024 Veteran of the Year for Virginia's Fourth Congressional District.

Lieutenant Colonel Powell held a variety of staff and command-level positions during his 23-year career in the U.S. Marines. He served two combat deployments in Somalia and Lebanon, including the ill-fated amphibious unit peacekeeping mission that was attacked in October 1983.

Lieutenant Colonel Powell also served as a White House advance officer under President Clinton, where he planned Presidential helicopter missions worldwide and served as the sole representative upon Marine One, responsible for coordinating with the Secret Service and White House Communication Agency.

Today, Lieutenant Colonel Powell continues his incredible record of service as the founder of a mentorship program at the Chesterfield County vet-

eran treatment docket, an important organization that provides resources and support for veterans suffering from mental health issues or substance abuse disorders.

Lieutenant Colonel Curt Powell has spent his life helping those around him, and I thank him for his profound contributions to our country, to our Commonwealth, and to his community.

I am honored to name him the 2024 Fourth Congressional District Veteran of the Year.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES MONTH AND NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, as we recognize National Veterans and Military Families Month and National Family Caregivers Month, we must recommit ourselves to helping our Nation's veterans, our real heroes.

It is important for Congress to pass the Veterans Caregiver Application and Appeals Reform Act, also known as the CARE Act. The CARE Act cuts red tape for our disabled veterans who apply through the VA caregivers program with veteran service organizations' assistance.

The CARE Act also requires the VA to ensure medical specialists are carefully reviewing applications and providing full transparency to our veterans as it pertains specifically to denials.

We must always lend a helping hand to our veterans and their families. Support of the CARE Act does exactly that, Madam Speaker.

TAKING A KEY STEP FORWARD

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise to thank the overwhelming majority of our colleagues who voted to pass the Social Security Fairness Act, necessary bipartisan legislation to ensure retired public servants do not lose out on essential earned Social Security retirement benefits for which they have worked hard.

As a key step forward, the bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act eliminates the harmful windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset, which reduce or eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of Americans who worked as public servants, including police officers, firefighters, and educators.

The next step is for Congress to fund the financing gap and work in partnership with affected States.

More than 2 million Americans and 165,000 Ohioans are impacted by the

windfall provision, and 800,000 nationwide are impacted by the government pension offset.

In a time of severe partisanship, I am pleased to note that 327 Members of the House voted for this bipartisan legislation. Let this be an example of collaboration and working across the aisle to find the big middle.

The House has done our work, and now I urge swift Senate passage so this legislation can be sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.

CELEBRATING MANCHESTER POLICE CHIEF ALLEN ALDENBERG'S RETIREMENT

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

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the impressive and impactful career of Manchester Police Chief Allen Aldenberg as he retires.

Throughout his life, Chief Aldenberg dedicated his efforts to serving others. In a military career spanning 30 years, he commanded from the company level to the brigade level and deployed in support of key operations to combat terrorism and protect our Nation after 9/11. He was awarded a Bronze Star medal for his service in Iraq from 2009 to 2010.

As a law enforcement officer for 27 years, including 4 years as chief in Manchester, Chief Aldenberg has worked with his officers, department staff, city leadership, and community members to make Manchester safer and stronger.

Madam Speaker, I wish him well in his next endeavor as the new chief military and veterans service officer at Easterseals Military and Veterans Campus. I join all Granite Staters in thanking Chief Aldenberg for his exceptional leadership and commitment to the people of Manchester and the State of New Hampshire.

I congratulate Chief Aldenberg on a job very well done.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JEN GIATTINO

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a dedicated public servant and friend, Hoboken Council President Jen Giattino, who passed away last week.

Jen was more than an elected official. She was someone who cared deeply for Hoboken and was a pillar for her community.

She was a champion for the unhoused, a compassionate advocate for small business owners, and a warm-hearted, generous presence throughout the city that she served and loved.

Her legacy will live on in Hoboken and the hearts of all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

In this difficult time, my thoughts are with her husband, Joe; her sons, Joe, Jack, and Alex; and her family, friends, and the people of Hoboken who adored her.

In her memory, let us live by the example that she set: compassion, generosity, and care for others.

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ADVOCATING FOR PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FOR OUR VETERANS

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for all Members to have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order hour.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Madam Speaker, today, I want to take a moment to remind us why we are here.

On my first day of Congress, which feels like so, so many years ago but was about 23 months ago, I made a commitment to represent, advocate, defend, and fight for the people. I made a promise to legislate with a vision for a better future for the constituents of my district. That includes veterans.

As a proud member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, my goal continues to be the same: Advance policies that improve the lives of veterans and ensure that they have access to every benefit they have earned and that has been promised to them.

However, I continue to be disappointed with so much extreme rhetoric from many of my colleagues to the right of me who choose to put politics over the lives of veterans, effectively watering down the protections and stonewalling progress on bills that would assist them.

The Congressional Progressive Caucus and I remain determined to do what is right for our veterans. That means advocating for better access to healthcare, fighting for our veterans experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, and advocating for our women veterans and their unique needs. Above all, when our veterans come home, we ensure they can lead a happy, fulfilling life after service.

Madam Speaker, we have delivered. I am proud to say that since Representative TAKANO's Honoring our PACT Act was signed into law, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the VA, has delivered more than \$6.8 billion in PACT Act benefits to veterans. Over 5.7 million veterans have received new toxic exposure screenings. Over 740,000 new veterans have enrolled in VA healthcare.

This means that more veterans are getting the care and benefits they rightfully earned.

The success of the PACT Act demonstrates what is possible when Congress prioritizes people over partisan politics, and it shows what can be done for veterans when Congress and agencies work together to deliver for our constituents.

Where the Department of Veterans Affairs succeeds also provides us with a broader vision and useful roadmap for what we can achieve for all Americans. The VA provides a basic housing allowance, population-specific healthcare, job assistance and training, and targeted interventions to prevent and address homelessness.

I believe that Congress can and should replicate the most promising parts of the VA to ensure the same base level of material and social support for our everyday working families. I believe we can eradicate poverty, prevent and end homelessness, and ensure that no person goes hungry or lives without essential healthcare.

It is actually possible for all Americans to lead a happy, fulfilling life and to retire with dignity. It starts with legislating with compassion and a commitment to the flourishing of our neighbors.

Despite Republican efforts to stop progress and turn the clock back 100 or more years, let me just say the Congressional Progressive Caucus and I will hold the line. We will defend our veterans. We will ensure they have every single benefit that veterans deserve, and we will honor their service with action.

I want to talk about the last 23 months and the work that I have done here in Congress. When I became an elected official, first as a State representative and now in Congress, I made a commitment. That commitment was to remain rooted in the community that I was elected to serve. Since joining the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have seen how critical it is for veterans and the families of veterans to receive the full benefits of our Nation's promise to them and what they have earned.

I am proud to say that during my freshman year—no longer a freshman in a couple of months—I have advocated for and introduced pieces of legislation that expand veteran access to education, healthcare, and housing.

Last year, I introduced the Student Veteran Benefits Restoration Act, which would reinstate GI benefits for students who pursued a degree at a college or university that defrauded them. I am proud to say this bill was voted on and passed by the House in April.

While the final negotiated bill is more limited in scope than I would have wanted, I do think it represents an ongoing commitment to work to ensure that veterans receive full access to the educational benefits that they have earned. I am committed to building on this momentum and continuing this fight into the 119th Congress.

This year, I am proud to have introduced the Servicemember Student Loan Affordability Act, with Senator DURBIN leading this effort in the Senate. What this bill would do is amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to limit the interest rate on student loans incurred by servicemembers before they go into military service. It will consolidate and refinance it during military service.

I was in my district on Veterans Day with veterans and veteran-serving organizations, and I heard how much they need for us to invest in them and address the issues of homelessness. As a matter of fact, I heard that, in the last year, we have seen another increase in homelessness among the veteran community.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to announce that I am introducing a new bill to create permanent housing opportunities for our veterans. The bill would expand the services that the grant per diem providers give to include prevention services and also allow for capital grants to be used to convert units into permanent housing.

I am eager to work with the committee around the bill introduction, and I am excited to be able to share more details on the bill very soon.

I voted to advance critical legislation that will bring solutions to the policy failures that leave our veterans and their families desperate and frustrated. During every hearing and every markup, I remain intentional in my efforts to ensure that we fulfill the promises our Nation has made to our veterans.

That work has to continue next Congress. In my opinion, that is how we honor service through action.

I want to talk a little bit about healthcare. One of the most pressing issues our veterans face is access to quality healthcare. Healthcare is a basic need that we must deliver for our veterans. Accessible healthcare for veterans shouldn't be considered a privilege but a right for those who have served their country.

Expanded health services will allow veterans to receive timely treatments for various medical conditions without having to worry about financial burdens or lengthy waits for appointments. Improved access to mental health services is also critical to address issues such as PTSD and other psychological conditions caused by military service.

Expanding healthcare for veterans will also help reduce the long-term costs associated with providing care for aging veterans, ensuring they receive the care they need in later life.

Veterans should be provided access to high-quality medical treatment, regardless of economic status or geographic location, so that they can all benefit from high-quality healthcare services without undue financial burden or delays in treatment.

To show appreciation and respect for their sacrifice and service to their country, our Nation is responsible for