

What an honor and privilege it has been for me to represent all of you.

To my team, words cannot express my gratitude for the hundreds of brilliant men and women who have served alongside me here in my congressional office and on the Energy and Commerce Committee, and back home in my district and campaign offices. While it was always my name on the door, it was your dedication that helped me succeed and deliver results.

Together, we have fun while we SERVE—Seek excellence, Everybody matters, Respectably own it, Vigilant integrity, and Embrace change. It made all the difference.

Although I would like to give each one of you a shout-out by name, I thank the leadership, various chiefs of staff, and district directors beginning with Connie Partoyan, Jeremy Deutsch, David Condon, David Peluso, Jared Powell, Kyle VonEnde, Karli Plucker, Dick Leland, Chud Wendle, Traci Couture, Patrick Bell, Kristina Sabestinas, Dawn Sugasa, Nate Hodson, and Sarah Burke, who helped me navigate the mighty waters, the many highs and lows, and the disappointments and crowning achievements of my time in Congress.

Most of all, I am grateful to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who lovingly drew me closer to him over the past 20 years. He has spoken to me about his mercies that are new each morning, and he has poured out his grace on me and my family.

As I leave Congress, I urge all of us to look for ways to cultivate more grace, love, and forgiveness in this world and serve others. We hope for a time of healing.

Alexis de Tocqueville said it so well. He said: “America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

I have served with so many good people and had the honor of representing the good people of eastern Washington. For that, I am grateful. I say thank you, may God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

HONORING KAY GRANGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart full of gratitude

and admiration to honor my dear friend and colleague, Representative KAY GRANGER, a true Texas legend whose retirement marks the end of an extraordinary era in this House.

KAY GRANGER is not just a trailblazer. She is absolutely a Texas institution. From her early days as the first woman to serve as the mayor of Fort Worth, to pave the way as the first Republican woman from the State of Texas to serve in Congress, to her historic tenure here in Congress serving Texas’ 12th Congressional District, KAY GRANGER has embodied the values that Texans hold dear.

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KAY GRANGER has embodied the values that Texans hold dear. Mr. Speaker, those values would happen to be faith, fortitude, and an absolute unwavering commitment to doing what is right.

As chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee where she made history becoming that, KAY demonstrated unparalleled leadership in guiding one of the most critical responsibilities for Congress, and that would be overseeing the power of the purse.

Mr. Speaker, KAY GRANGER’s wisdom and steady hand have ensured that our appropriations process prioritized the need of the American people while safeguarding the principles of limited government.

I have had the privilege of serving along with KAY in the Texas delegation for the past 11 years, Mr. Speaker, and let me tell you, she has been nothing short of extraordinary. In Texas we say: You done good.

The Texas row on the House floor will not be the same without her. KAY has been an absolute cornerstone of our Texas delegation, a voice we have relied on, a leader we have admired, and a friend we have cherished.

KAY’s leadership on the House Appropriations Committee and her ability to get things done have moved the needle in a giant Texas way, and not just for Texas, but for the entire country.

KAY, your dedication to service has truly been a blessing to this Congress and to every Texan who has had the honor of calling you their Representative. You have made Texas proud, KAY GRANGER, and we are all better for having worked alongside you.

KAY, please know this: as you head into retirement, you are leaving a legacy that will surely stand the test of time. We hope you get to enjoy that retirement in the greatest State in the Nation, the one and only Lone Star State.

Let me reiterate, KAY, thank you for your friendship, for your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to the values we hold dear.

God bless you, KAY. May He continue to hold you and continue to guide you in this next chapter.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the eve of her retirement to

honor Chairwoman KAY GRANGER for her many years of dedicated work on behalf of Texans everywhere and our entire country.

For nearly three decades, Chairwoman GRANGER has tirelessly served the 12th Congressional District of Texas. For many of us, she has been a valued mentor, and, more importantly, a respected friend. As the most senior member of the Texas Republican delegation, her experience, wisdom, and leadership have been a valuable resource. In fact, they have been invaluable.

Chairwoman GRANGER has been a true trailblazer, and her legacy will not be soon forgotten. Her time in public service has been marked by many firsts. She served as the first female mayor of Fort Worth, the first Republican Congresswoman from Texas, and the first female Republican to chair the powerful House Appropriations Committee.

Over the years, Chairwoman GRANGER has left a lasting impact on the Dallas/Fort Worth area, our great State of Texas, and our Nation as a whole. She has worked tirelessly to advocate for her constituents and to advance policies and improve the lives of both Texans and Americans everywhere.

She has successfully secured funding for many worthy local funding projects in Fort Worth, increased local and national defense spending to protect the American people, and kept a close eye on overall Federal spending. Her contributions to preserving our national security and supporting economic growth will not soon be forgotten.

Chairwoman GRANGER, thank you for setting the standard in our mission to represent the great people of Texas. Your leadership is a testament to the strength of the Texas spirit, and your work will have a lasting impact for generations to come. We have truly been blessed by your leadership, dedication, and service, but, most of all, your friendship.

Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career and accomplishments of my lifelong friend, KAY GRANGER. We both shared Fort Worth as our hometown.

Throughout the years, I have watched her lead in the classroom, on the city council as mayor, as a Congresswoman, and as chairwoman. She can make a deal, she can close a deal, and she has no problem making a decision and sticking with it. Her word is her bond, and to her, a handshake means something. She has truly lived a life worth being copied.

To my friend and colleague, KAY, thank you for your friendship and thank you for your leadership.

May God bless you, and in God we trust.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY).

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor someone who has been a mentor, a trailblazer, and a dear friend, Congresswoman KAY GRANGER.

KAY's story is the kind of Texas story all of us Texans admire. She spent her entire life serving others, and she has done it with the kind of grit and determination that defines what we like to think about when thinking about Texas. From her days as a schoolteacher to becoming the mayor of Fort Worth and now serving right here in this Chamber, Miss KAY has poured her heart and soul into every role she has taken on. She has led with strength, wisdom, and a deep love for people she represents.

As the first Republican woman to chair the Appropriations Committee, KAY broke barriers and made history. There have only been about 11,000 people who have served in this Chamber, but Miss KAY is one of one.

If you know KAY, then you know she didn't do it for the accolades, she didn't do it to break barriers, and she didn't do it to break the grass ceiling. She did it because she believed in getting things done; and, boy, did she ever. From standing up for our military and veterans to ensuring that north Texas communities got the resources they needed, she has left a mark that will be felt for generations.

On a personal level, KAY has been a guidepost for me. From day one she has been generous with her time and advice, always ready with a word of encouragement or a little bit of wisdom delivered with that look that only she could give. That woman would walk into a room very quietly, and no matter how loud the room was, it got quiet because she had that presence about her.

She has reminded me that public service is staying true to your word and putting people first and that what you do here in Congress only matters if it improves the lives of those back home.

KAY, I think I speak for just about everyone in this room, well, everybody in Texas, when I say that you cannot be replaced. Your boots are way too big for anybody to fill. We are all going to miss you. However, what you have done will echo far beyond these Halls and these years. Your leadership and heart have touched so many lives, and your legacy is one of dedication, integrity, and love for Texas and this great country.

Thank you, Miss KAY, for everything, for paving the way, for showing us all how it is done, and for being a good friend. I know you will keep making a difference wherever life takes you next.

200 YEARS OF THE CITY OF DICKINSON

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 200 years of the city of Dickinson, Texas, which I am proud to represent in Texas' 14th Congressional District. Dickinson has a

storied history, and I want to be the first to say: Happy bicentennial.

The city of Dickinson is named after John Dickinson, a landowner whose name became synonymous with the area. What began as an agricultural settlement in the mid-1800s would eventually grow into a thriving community thanks to the arrival of the railroad and the dreams of those who sought to make Dickinson their home.

From its fertile soil to the efforts of early entrepreneurs who formed the Dickinson Land and Improvement Association, this city has long been a beacon of promise on the Gulf Coast. In its early days, Dickinson became known for its productive farming and later as a destination for those seeking a peaceful, prosperous life along the bayous and the prairies.

Over the years, Dickinson has grown alongside the industrial expansions of nearby Houston and Galveston. The city's strategic location along major rail lines and highways has allowed it to benefit from the region's booming oil and shipping, as well as industrial sectors. When NASA established the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in 1962, it brought a new era of opportunity and development to our community and to its neighbors.

Today, Dickinson is home to over 20,000 hardworking, admirable citizens who exemplify the very best of southeast Texas values. This is a community built on grit, resilience, and a deep sense of pride.

As your Representative, I am grateful every day to stand before you as the voice of the city of Dickinson in these hallowed Halls of Congress. It is an honor to represent a city that has made so many contributions to the progression of our region.

Here is to many more years of Dickinson pride, progress, and the enduring southeast Texas spirit that defines us. Happy anniversary, Dickinson, and may your future be as bright as your storied past.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

HONORING KAY GRANGER

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WEBER so very much for yielding.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, we honor a trailblazing woman, Texas Congresswoman KAY GRANGER. Without question, history will record Chairwoman GRANGER shattered many glass ceilings during her service in Congress.

She became the first Texas woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Think about that alone, just coming out of Texas, the first woman, starting in 1997.

KAY went on to serve honorably in this Chamber for 28 years. She became the first Republican woman to receive appointment to the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations and then later became its chair. She rose also as a leader for her party on the committee, including as chairwoman of the full committee, for the first year of the 118th Congress.

KAY always found a way to work together in a bipartisan fashion to pass our Nation's largest budget to bolster our Nation's military, surely for the advancement of the F-35, as well as funding in another agency, NASA's, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Artemis program and other space priorities.

She always had a vision beyond the narrow to embrace the globe.

I have always appreciated her professionalism and her passion, which she kept under control, especially for her home State of Texas, and her candor and no-nonsense demeanor. I know that KAY will continue to speak for the people of Parker and Tarrant Counties and to work for their betterment even in retirement because that is her nature.

I am virtually and mentally sending her a bouquet of roses as we are speaking tonight. I thank her for her remarkable and honorable service to our Nation. We wish her Godspeed on a job exceptionally well-done.

I have heartfelt wishes that the years ahead will be ones of fulfillment and adventure, as well.

Mr. Speaker, regarding a previous Special Order this evening, I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD The New York Times article about the changes in Syria written by Peter Baker and Adam Entous.

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

There was no objection.

[From The New York Times, Dec. 8, 2024]

BIDEN WEIGHS APPROACH TO REBELS IN SYRIA
AMID SECRET MESSAGE EXCHANGE

(By Peter Baker and Adam Entous)

President Biden faces the challenge of deciding how to engage the main armed group that toppled President Bashar al-Assad, even though it remains designated a terrorist organization by the United States.

For President Biden, the fall of Syria's tyrant on Sunday was a moment to cheer what he called a "fundamental act of justice" and to claim a measure of credit for his own policy.

But it also presented Mr. Biden with a fundamental challenge late in his presidency: How does the United States make friends with the newly emerging forces taking control in Syria when it has deemed them terrorists? And should it?

The main rebel faction that toppled President Bashar al-Assad is a group called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which was once an affiliate of Al Qaeda and, even though it broke with the older organization years ago, remains designated a terrorist group itself by the U.S. government.

The United States has been passing messages through the Turkish government in recent days to the rebel groups involved in the lightning blitz that suddenly took down Mr. al-Assad, mainly warning them against teaming up with militants from the Islamic State. The groups responded through the Turks with assurances that they had no intention of allowing the Islamic State to be part of their movement, according to U.S. and Turkish officials briefed on the messages.

But now Mr. Biden and his top advisers are debating the extent to which they should engage directly with the rebel groups going forward, according to the officials, who described internal deliberations on the condition of anonymity. U.S. intelligence analysts and administration policymakers were trying to determine whether the groups had substantially changed, or were prepared to change, their ways to address the concerns of the United States and its allies in the region about terrorist affiliations.

In a televised statement from the White House hailing the fall of the Assad family's half century of repressive rule in Syria, Mr. Biden gave voice to the mix of cautious optimism and wary uncertainty about the new forces taking power in Syria.

"Make no mistake, some of the rebel groups that took down Assad have their own grim record of terrorism and human rights abuses," he said on Sunday. "We've taken note of statements by the leaders of these rebel groups in recent days and they're saying the right things now. But as they take on greater responsibility, we will assess not just their words but their actions."

The Islamic State, or ISIS, remains a key concern for U.S. leaders. After destroying the so-called caliphate that the group carved out of Syria and Iraq for itself, the United States does not want to give it any opportunity to reassert itself in the chaos that may follow the fall of the government in Damascus.

"We're cleareyed about the fact that ISIS will try to take advantage of any vacuum to reestablish its capability, to create a safe haven," Mr. Biden said. "We will not let that happen."

To that end, Mr. Biden authorized U.S. airstrikes on Sunday against Islamic State camps and operatives inside Syria. A swarm of B-52, F-15 and A-10 warplanes hit more than 75 targets in central Syria with about 140 munitions, according to U.S. officials.

"There should be no doubt—we will not allow ISIS to reconstitute and take advantage of the current situation in Syria," said Gen. Michael E. Kurilla, the head of the U.S. Central Command, which oversees operations in the region. "All organizations in Syria should know that we will hold them accountable if they partner with or support ISIS in any way."

The situation for the United States is all the more complicated by its own transition in Washington. Mr. Biden has just six weeks left in office before turning over the White House to President-elect Donald J. Trump, who has taken pride in his role in defeating the Islamic State in his first term while otherwise agitating to stay uninvolved in Syria.

In his only comments after Mr. al-Assad's fall on Sunday, Mr. Trump gave little clue to his thinking about Syria's future. Instead, he cast the matter entirely in terms of its implications for Russia, which had propped up Mr. al-Assad for nearly a decade but essentially left him to his own fate in recent days while it remains tied down in Ukraine.

"Assad is gone," Mr. Trump wrote on his social media site. "He has fled his country. His protector, Russia, Russia, Russia, led by Vladimir Putin, was not interested in protecting him any longer."

He added that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia should now pursue peace talks over Ukraine. "There should be an immediate ceasefire and negotiations should begin," he wrote. "Too many lives are being so needlessly wasted, too many families destroyed, and if it keeps going, it can turn into something much bigger, and far worse. I know Vladimir well. This is his time to act."

Mr. Biden left no doubt about American satisfaction over Mr. al-Assad's ouster. The Syrian president has been a crushing ruler of

his own people, held responsible for the deaths of more than 500,000 people and the displacement of millions more during a civil war he waged to hold on to power. He has used chemical weapons on his own people and been a source of major instability in the region. As far back as 2011, President Barack Obama called on Mr. al-Assad to go and later drew a "red line" against the use of chemical weapons that he did not enforce.

"At long last, the Assad regime has fallen," Mr. Biden said in his televised remarks from the Roosevelt Room. "This regime brutalized and tortured and killed literally hundreds of thousands of innocent Syrians. The fall of the regime is a fundamental act of justice. It's a moment of historic opportunity for the long-suffering people of Syria to build a better future for their proud country. It's also a moment of risk and uncertainty."

Indeed, as U.S. policymakers have learned through painful experience in other places in the past couple of decades, places like Libya, Egypt, Iraq and Afghanistan, the demise of a loathsome dictator does not necessarily lead to a friendlier, more democratic, more stable government in his place.

The rebel groups have united under the leadership of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Once seen as one of the rebellion's most powerful extremist factions, the group later tried to play down its radical aspects and focused on building something like a civilian government—albeit an authoritarian and extremist one—in the patch of territory that it has controlled.

U.S. intelligence agencies and top officials in the Biden administration are still in the process of evaluating the group and its leader, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, who is eager for legitimacy and has mounted what one senior U.S. official characterized as a "charm offensive" aimed at allaying concerns about the organization's intentions and past affiliations.

The way the official put it, "A charm offensive might mean that people are turning over a new leaf and they think differently than they used to, so you should hear them out. On the other hand, you should be cautious because charm offensives can sometimes be misleading."

U.S. officials said that the Biden administration was allowed to talk to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and its leader even though they are on the terrorist list, but that it could not provide them with material support.

While the Biden administration has so far stopped short of directly talking to the group, it has been working closely and directly with the U.S. military's main counterterrorism partner in Syria, a Kurdish-led militia known as the Syrian Democratic Forces.

According to U.S. officials, the administration encouraged and provided intelligence support to the Kurds for its operations to take control of Syrian territory in eastern Syria, including the cities Deir al-Zour and Abu Kamal.

The officials said the operations were meant to ensure that the Islamic State could not take advantage of the situation and seize the areas as Syrian government forces withdrew. According to a U.S. official, the message that the United States sent to the Kurds was, "If the regime vacates territory, it's going to go to somebody, so you should fill the vacuum yourself rather than let ISIS fill into that vacuum."

Mr. Biden said he was sending officials to the Middle East and would personally speak with leaders from the region in the coming days. He expressed commitment to helping Israel, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon as they cope with the possible spillover effects of the turmoil in Syria.

While Mr. al-Assad is reported to have now fled to Moscow, where he is being given asylum, Mr. Biden said the deposed Syrian leader should not be allowed impunity after years of crimes. "Assad should be held accountable," he said.

In his remarks, Mr. Biden mentioned Austin Tice, the American journalist who has been held in Syria for a dozen years. Asked by reporters about Mr. Tice's fate after turning from his microphone, Mr. Biden paused before walking out to say: "We believe he's alive. We think we can get him back."

After years of trying to manage foreign crises that cost his party in last month's election, won by Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden sought to take a share of credit for Mr. al-Assad's downfall.

He said the victory of the rebel forces over Mr. al-Assad's government was made possible by the collapse of his support from Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, all of which the United States had a hand in. He noted that U.S. military aid and diplomatic support for Ukraine and Israel had bogged down Russian forces in Europe, helped destroy Hezbollah in Lebanon and thwarted two attacks by Iran on Israel. As a result, none could help Mr. al-Assad survive.

"Over the last week, their support collapsed, all three of them, because all three of them are far weaker today than they were when I took office," Mr. Biden said.

"The upshot of this is for the first time ever, neither Russia nor Iran nor Hezbollah could defend this horrible regime in Syria," he added. "This is a direct result of the blows" inflicted by Ukraine and Israel "with the support of the United States."

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. WEBER so much for doing this on Kay's behalf.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for her remarks.

AMBASSADORS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege today to recognize Ambassadors Preparatory Academy in Galveston, Texas, which I am proud to represent, for being selected as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2024 by the U.S. Department of Education.

Mr. Speaker, the National Blue Ribbon School program seeks to honor schools from around the country that have a vision of excellence and hold their students and faculty to a high standard. I can't think of a more worthy school than Ambassadors Preparatory Academy.

Since 2007, this school has pushed each and every student, giving students from low socio-economic backgrounds a chance of high-quality education and fostering holistic student development through the collective efforts of dedicated staff, dedicated parents, and dedicated community members.

I believe their mission, Mr. Speaker, and their dedication to it have rightfully earned them this great honor. Their commitment to providing high-quality education through, student-centered, data-driven instruction in a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment builds a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the superintendent, Dr. Rachelle Joseph; the

wonderful teachers; the educators; and the staff at Ambassadors Preparatory Academy, as well as the dedicated students and their families on this great achievement.

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IN HONOR OF DAVID ANDREW CHRISTIAN

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor a remarkable man, David Andrew Christian, who was called home to be with our Lord on April 18 at the young, young age of 52.

Andy was a man of many talents, pursuing careers such as underwater welding and transitioning to a pilot, where he was employed with the Garrett Flying Service for over three decades.

His attainment of the Pilot of the Year Award from the Texas Agricultural Aviation Association was a small recognition for how truly amazing he was.

Andy was a guiding light in his community. He dedicated himself to serving God through charitable work and actively participating in his church as a eucharistic minister and a proud member of the Knights of Columbus.

Andy exemplified the values that make this country great: faith, hard work, and service to others. May we all follow in Andy's footsteps and lead with loyalty, kindness, and service.

Mr. Speaker, it was an honor to represent Andy in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY).

HONORING KAY GRANGER

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas for yielding, and I appreciate his efforts to block this time for the Texas delegation to honor one of our own, KAY GRANGER, whom we will miss going forward.

So many of my colleagues have already touched on her biography and on her history as a teacher, businesswoman, mayor, Congresswoman, and, probably most importantly, wife and mother.

She is someone who has served Texas so ably and well, rising up to chair the Appropriations Committee and to do so with grace during a fairly tumultuous time in our Nation's history—this is not political; this is about honoring KAY—because of the nature of our disagreements with the current administration and the current state of things.

She managed the appropriations process and committee with grace and class. She has been a true joy to work with.

I don't always race to the floor to do these. I feel like you have to know someone pretty well or have a certain level of understanding and respect, but KAY was always very gracious and kind to me as a not-always soft-spoken member of the Conference or the delegation, as my friend from Texas knows. She was always one who would try to reach out and offer some advice, but not try to tell me what to do or say, but to come in and talk to me about what we need to do as Texans and how we can work together to do it.

She always cared about Texas. She always cared about service, and I was proud to serve with her. None of us in this body agree on everything at any given moment, but to work with someone who had such a fervor for public service from, as I said, the time of being a teacher, mayor, Congresswoman, and rising up to run the Appropriations Committee.

I will miss her. We were proud to have her in the Texas delegation as the chair of Appropriations, but she will be able to be back in Texas, which is a good thing.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT "BOB" WIENERS

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor the life of an exceptional public servant, a man who served our great Nation with unwavering integrity and dedication, and a friend I was proud to know, Chief Robert Wieners, who went home to be with the Lord on August 24, 2024.

After graduating from Boston State College in 1978, Bob answered the call to serve our Nation in the United States Marine Corps. Over the course of more than 20 years, he rose through the ranks to become a lieutenant colonel, retiring from Active Duty on September 1, 1998.

His time in the Marines was marked by superior leadership and operational excellence, a testament to the character of a man we honor today.

Friendswood was truly blessed beyond measure when Bob and his bride, Susan, made it their home. For over two decades, Bob led our community as chief of police, leaving an indelible mark on Friendswood through his 24 years of dedicated service.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of getting to know Bob over the years, and his tireless work to protect our community along with his deep love of Friendswood will never be forgotten.

Brenda Gail and I are praying for the entire Wieners family, the Friendswood Police Department, and everyone who had the privilege of calling Bob their friend.

Mr. Speaker, may we all proudly uphold the values he so proudly embodied.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHESTER A. "PETE" SHELTON

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to a great American, Chester A. "Pete" Shelton, who was called home to be with the Lord on July 25, 2024.

Pete was the kind of man who knew what it meant to serve. Following in his family's footsteps, he became a Beaumont firefighter right after high school and eventually served as the city's fire chief.

He didn't stop there. Pete answered the call of duty by joining the United States Army in 1958, proudly serving

his country and continuing in the Reserves until 1966.

Beaumont was blessed to have Pete's dedication. He not only helped develop the fire chief's code of ethics but also gave over 30 years of service on the Port of Beaumont Board of Commissioners. His impact was deep, and his commitment to service was unwavering.

Mr. Speaker, Pete Shelton's legacy of kindness, compassion, and selfless service will live on in the hearts of all who knew him. May we all strive to live by the values he so faithfully upheld.

HONORING YVONNE DEWEY

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor a true patriot and dear friend, the incredible Yvonne Dewey. She was called home to be with the Lord on September 2 at age 84.

Yvonne was the very definition of honor and loyalty. I knew her personally. When she moved to Lake Jackson, Texas, back in 1971, she didn't just plant roots. She left a legacy.

Her impact on our community and the Republican Party is immeasurable. She didn't just participate. She led, serving on countless boards and associations, always working to better the lives of our youth.

Mr. Speaker, when she stepped in to chair the Republican Party of Brazoria County for 21 years, she did a great job. I watched her up close and personal.

I had the privilege of meeting Yvonne when I was just a precinct chair. She was someone I could look up to for wisdom and leadership. Over the years, we developed a lasting friendship.

I saw firsthand her gift for leading the Republican Party and helping elect the kind of patriots that represent the best of Brazoria County.

Yvonne didn't just talk the talk; she lived it. Her spirit and passion for conservative principles were undeniable, and her selfless dedication earned her the respect of so many in our community.

This woman of service led by example, and we can all learn from her kindness, her dedication, and her selflessness. Her legacy will live on in Brazoria County, and I am honored to have served her in Congress and, most of all, to have called her my friend.

Mr. Speaker, let us pray that we continue to see fearless leaders like Yvonne Dewey rise up for our Nation. Her love for this country and southeast Texas is and was unmatched.

Brenda Gail and I extend our heartfelt thanks to her husband of 50 years, John Dewey, who was her rock, and we know how deeply she loved him and the family.

HONORING RAY HOLBROOK

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an incredible man and true Texas patriot, Ray Holbrook, who was called home to be with the Lord on May 1 of this year at the vibrant age of 97.

Ray was a pillar of strength, integrity, and service to Galveston County

for many, many years. He served as the longest-standing county judge from 1967 to 1995, dedicating nearly three decades of his life to making his community a better place, and he was very successful.

Ray wasn't just a judge. He was a man of action, Mr. Speaker. A proud Aggie, he is fondly remembered for his tireless work of improving roads, upgrading parks, and fighting to improve the lives of county employees by removing them from Social Security and putting them on a better retirement system.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps his greatest legacy is helping create the Galveston County Water Authority, which has grown over time into the Gulf Coast Water Authority, ensuring that future generations will have access to the water resources they so desperately need.

Ray's impact reaches far beyond his accomplishments in office. He was a beloved father and friend, a man whose deep faith and unwavering commitment to his neighbors left an indelible mark on all who knew him. His life of service, devotion to his community, and deep love for the Lord will continue to inspire us all.

May God bless Ray Holbrook's family, and may his legacy of leadership, honor, and faith live on in Galveston County and beyond.

CELEBRATING RETIREMENT OF TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD LYNN "ED" THOMPSON

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend and esteemed successor from the great legislative district of Texas-29 on the occasion of his retirement as State representative.

Since taking office in 2013, he has been a staunch defender of Texas constitutional rights. His leadership has been pivotal in securing funding for Texas roads, supporting our public schools, and fighting to protect our border. His unwavering commitment to our State has been felt across Texas.

Ed has stood firm against Federal overreach, championed policies that protect the unborn, and defended our religious liberties.

Ed's legacy of principled leadership and courage will be deeply missed.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great admiration and respect that I thank my good friend for his leadership. Southeast Texas and the great State of Texas are better because of him.

Brenda Gail and I wish him and his bride, Freddie, all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

May God bless him and Freddie in their retirement, and may God continue to bless Texas.

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

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, everyone knows the saying "nobody messes with Texas." Well, the same could be said of Chairwoman KAY GRANGER. She's as "Texas Tough" as it comes, an unwavering force evident in her nearly three decades of faithful service to our Nation.

As someone who has sat at the leadership table alongside her and worked hand-in-glove with her on the Appropriations Committee, I can attest that she is one of the best legislators I have ever had the honor and privilege of working with. Throughout her career, she has fiercely fought for the people of Texas' 12th district. She is the definition of a defense hawk—steadfast in her commitment to ensuring our Nation remains the number one military power in the world. And she is a conservative stalwart that masterfully negotiated Republican priorities in a gridlocked government.

Her trailblazing career was characterized by historic firsts. She was the first woman mayor of Fort Worth, the first Republican woman to serve in Congress in the Texas delegation, the first woman to serve on and chair the Defense Subcommittee, and the first Republican woman to chair the full Appropriations Committee.

More importantly than her impressive list of accomplishments and superb leadership abilities, she has been a dear friend to me, who showed me the ropes and whose invaluable wisdom I will dearly miss here in Congress. Texas was lucky. America was luckier.

Chairwoman GRANGER leaves behind a towering legacy of grit and grace that will continue to inspire this institution for decades to come and it is a privilege to honor her on the House Floor.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Congressman WEBER, for putting this Special Order together. I know it is probably odd seeing a Democrat up here, but let it be known:

KAY and I go way back. I've known her since the 1990's, when she made history as the first woman Mayor of Fort Worth, while also being a single mom. Even then, she had that Texas grit and determination that's carried her through a lifetime of breaking barriers.

As the first woman to represent the 12th District of Texas, KAY showed what it means to lead with heart and conviction. She's fought for her community every step of the way, never backing down from a challenge. They say, "Don't mess with Texas," but really, don't mess with a Texas woman on a mission. Texas—and this Congress—will miss her.

JOINT EXPLANATORY MATERIAL STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA, CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, ON HOUSE AMENDMENT TO SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5009

The following consists of the joint explanatory material to accompany the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025.

Section 5 of the Act specifies that this joint explanatory statement shall have the same effect with respect to the implementation of this legislation as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference.

In this joint explanatory statement, the provisions of H.R. 8070, the House-passed version of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, are generally referred to as "the House bill". The provisions of S. 4638, the Senate Committee on Armed Services committee-reported version of the National Defense Authoriza-

tion Act for Fiscal Year 2025, are generally referred to as "the Senate committee-reported bill". The provisions in the Senate floor manager's package are generally referred to as "a proposed amendment (amendment number 3290) to the Senate committee-reported bill". The final form of the agreements reached during negotiations between the House and the Senate are referred to as "the agreement".

Disclosure of earmarks and congressionally directed spending items

Although not required by the Rules of the House of Representatives, the joint explanatory statement includes a table that lists the congressional earmarks (as defined in paragraph (e) of clause 9 of rule XXI of the House of Representatives) that are contained in the bill or this joint explanatory statement at the request of a Member of the House of Representatives. The bill or this joint explanatory statement does not contain any congressional earmarks at the request of a Senator. Neither the bill nor the joint explanatory statement contains any limited tax benefits or limited tariff benefits as defined in paragraphs (f) or (g) of clause 9 of rule XXI of the House of Representatives.

Summary of discretionary authorizations and budget authority implication

The budget request for national defense discretionary programs within the jurisdiction of the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives for fiscal year 2025 was \$883.7 billion. Of this amount, \$849.5 billion was requested for Department of Defense programs, \$33.8 billion was requested for national security programs in the Department of Energy and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and \$378 million for defense-related activities.

The agreement would authorize \$883.7 billion in fiscal year 2025, including \$849.9 billion for Department of Defense programs, \$33.3 billion for national security programs in the Department of Energy and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, and \$512.4 million for defense-related activities.

The two tables preceding the detailed program adjustments in division D of the accompanying joint explanatory statement summarize the discretionary authorizations in the agreement and the equivalent budget authority levels for fiscal year 2025 defense programs.

Sec. 4—Budgetary effects of this Act

The Senate committee-reported bill contained a provision (sec. 4) that would state the budgetary effects of this Act for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-139).

The House bill contained no similar provision.

The agreement includes the Senate provision.

DIVISION A—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATIONS

TITLE I—PROCUREMENT

SUBTITLE A—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 101—Authorization of appropriations

The House bill contained a provision (sec. 101) that would authorize appropriations for procurement at the levels identified in section 4101 of division D of this Act.

The Senate committee-reported bill contained an identical provision (sec. 101).

The agreement includes this provision.

SUBTITLE B—ARMY PROGRAMS

Sec. 111—Centralized Security Monitoring Program for facilities of the Army

The Senate committee-reported bill contained a provision (sec. 111) that would require the Secretary of the Army to establish