

When I was elected, I vowed to be an effective legislator, somebody who would put aside party politics and work across the aisle to pass legislation meaningful to the lives not just of my constituents back home but of all Americans, and I did that.

In my 12 years here, I have had fully 16 bills, pieces of substantive legislation passed into law by the past three Presidents. These are laws that are actively protecting our Nation's veterans, preserving our environment, reducing government waste, and helping government work more efficiently.

I have also worked to restore passenger rail between Scranton, Pennsylvania, and New York City. After more than 12 years of hard work, we are finally on the cusp of seeing that come true, thanks in large part to the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law we passed last Congress.

I seek to give credit to my outstanding staff, including former members of Team Cartwright, who are amazing people who worked so hard.

To my district staff, former State Senator John Blake, Bob Morgan, April Niver, Tammy Aita, Colleen Gerrity, Jonas Crass, Christa Mecadon, Wendy Wilson, Lee Anne Pugliese, Len Namiotka, Tyler McAlpine, Michael Marsyada, Sabrina McLaughlin, Anne Lauritzen, and Chris Garza; and to my staff here in D.C., my formidable Chief of Staff Hunter Ridgway, Rachel Cohen, Kaylee Robinson, Jeremy Marcus, Stephen Coffey, Samuel Negatu, Karina Hull, RT Rogers, Laura Masterton, Lily Fortsch, Aliza Oppenheim, Daniela Amodei, Anna Mason, Jacob Feit, and Casey Wilson, your work has directly touched the lives of so many in our district and America.

A thank-you is also in order for the outstanding staff on the Appropriations Committee who worked for me. Clerk Bob Bonner and staff members Shannon McCully, Faye Cobb, Nora Faye, and Jamie Wise have been so valuable to me during my time as chair and ranking member of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee.

None of my work or success would have been possible without the unending support of my family: my sons, Jack and Matty, and their partners, Dr. Tim DeVita and Dr. Celeste Pallone; the wonderful support from the whole family; and my rock, my North Star, my wonderful wife, attorney Marion Munley Cartwright. I thank her for letting me go on this 12-year junket. It has been a real party.

Madam Speaker, this is the United States Congress. When you make it here, you have made it to the major leagues of world politics.

I have seen it all here in 12 years. I have seen stupendous skullduggery and treachery, and I have observed Olympic-caliber levels of obsequiousness, but I have also served with the best people I have ever met in my life.

These are people whom you look up to, people whom you admire, and men

and women whom you would do anything for. Your only regret is that you didn't know them your entire life. It has been my honor to serve alongside them.

In the darkling predawn light of a spring day in May 1775, when Ethan Allen attacked the British garrison at Fort Ticonderoga at the beginning of the American Revolution, he demanded that the British surrender the fort in the name of the great God Jehovah and the Continental Congress.

I am here to say that I have gotten to know the latter. It has been my honor to serve in the latter and to get to know the latter, and now I am off in search of the former.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN JIM LEACH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of former Congressman Jim Leach, who recently passed away.

Jim Leach represented southeast Iowa in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1977 to 2013, the district I now represent, leaving an indelible mark on our State and Nation.

As chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, he played a key role in shaping financial regulations that promoted stability and competition.

Known for his integrity and civility, Jim worked across the aisle to build bridges and promote bipartisan solutions. He was also a principled leader, notably voting against the Iraq war, reflecting his commitment to thoughtful, measured foreign policy.

Jim's legacy of public service, grounded in his deep love for Iowa and his country, continues to inspire. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

RECOGNIZING PLEASANT VALLEY SPARTAN GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL TEAM

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Pleasant Valley Spartan girls' volleyball team for their 2024 State volleyball championship. This valiant effort, spurred on by Coach Amber Hall and team captain Isabelle Kremer, led to the Spartans winning their second State title in 4 years. They finished the season with an astonishing 35-2 record.

This culture of excellence established in Pleasant Valley will serve as a springboard for these young women, compelling them to strive for that same excellence in their professional lives. The leadership imbued in them will shine through in all aspects of life.

The Pleasant Valley all-in mentality, which pushes students and teachers to give 100 percent effort in athletics and academics, was established in 2016 and has been a cornerstone of accomplish-

ment ever since. The goal of this rallying cry is to instill a growth mindset that encourages everyone to learn together and push each other to always give their best.

Congratulations to the Pleasant Valley girls' volleyball team, which made us all proud.

HOLDING PHARMACY BENEFIT MANAGERS ACCOUNTABLE

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of President Trump's call to hold pharmacy benefit managers accountable for their role in driving up prescription drug prices.

Currently, six PBMs control over 90 percent of the U.S. prescription drug market, and they are destroying independent pharmacies, especially in rural areas like Iowa. In fact, 25 independent pharmacies have closed in Iowa this year alone.

The first legislation I passed on PBM reform and transparency was as a State senator in 2019.

PBMs use tactics like spread pricing, where they charge insurers more than they reimburse pharmacies, and they pocket the difference. As a result, PBM profits have increased over 300 percent, while prescription drug prices have surged nearly 40 percent, far outpacing inflation.

That is why I introduced the DRUG Act, bipartisan legislation that bans spread pricing, patient steering, and other harmful PBM practices.

It is time for transparency and fairness in our healthcare system. Let's get started on President Trump's agenda and pass PBM reform now.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO PEOPLE OF IOWA

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, as Christmas approaches, I want to take a moment to wish the people of Iowa a very merry Christmas. This is a time of year to reflect on the blessings we have received, to show gratitude for our loved ones, and to embrace the spirit of giving.

For me, Christmas is especially meaningful because it is a time to slow down and spend quality time with my family and friends and to deliver my well-known cinnamon rolls. In our busy lives, these moments together are precious, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to share them with those I love most.

Iowa is a place where community and family are at the heart of everything we do. As we celebrate this season, I encourage everyone to share these connections and spread kindness to those around you.

To my fellow Iowans, may your homes be filled with love, joy, and peace this Christmas. I am truly grateful for each of you. Merry Christmas and happy new year.

WARM WISHES DURING HANUKKAH

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, as Hanukkah begins, I want to wish the Jewish community in Iowa and across the country a happy and meaningful holiday.

Hanukkah is a time to celebrate light, tradition, and the strength of family and faith.

This season, as families gather to light the menorah and share their meals, I hope they find moments of peace, joy, and reflection. Hanukkah reminds us that even in challenging times, we can always find hope and light.

To all those who are celebrating, I send my warmest wishes for a wonderful Hanukkah filled with love and happiness. May your homes be filled with warmth, and may this season bring you closer to those you cherish most.

Happy Hanukkah.

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CONGRATULATING IOWA LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
CHRIS COURNOYER

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize my good friend, who I served with in the State senate, Senator Chris Cournoyer, for being named the Lieutenant Governor under Governor Reynolds. Once again, Iowa is trailblazing with this Lieutenant Governor selection.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Senator Cournoyer.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address this body for my final time as the sole Representative from the great and first State of Delaware.

I remember how I felt back in 1988 standing on the steps of the Capitol as an intern with our then-Congressman Tom Carper. From intern to caseworker, cabinet member, colleague, and now his successor, building on his incredible legacy fills me with great pride.

I thank Senator CARPER for everything he has done.

I also remember how I felt as I walked into this room as Delaware's Congresswoman, humbled, honored, and hopeful because, to borrow the words of the musical "Hamilton," this is "The Room Where It Happens."

It is where legislators have convened to debate ideas and uphold ideals. It is where we have heard legendary speeches from Presidents, world leaders, and influential past and present Members of this body.

It is where Jeannette Rankin became the first woman Member of Congress, only after the House's monthlong debate on whether a woman was fit for the job. It is also where I got to serve with luminaries like John Lewis.

It is also where landmark legislation was passed, from the Civil Rights Act, to the Affordable Care Act, to the bipartisan infrastructure law. This is the room where we, the people, have forged America's future.

The first time the House of Representatives used this room was on De-

ember 16, 1857, 167 years ago, almost to this very day. It was also the year the Supreme Court ruled that Black Americans were not citizens under the law.

I stand here 167 years later, the first woman and Black person elected to Congress from Delaware, on the shoulders of our ancestors, delivering my final speech before being sworn in as a United States Senator.

My journey represents the promise and potential of America. When I decided to run for Congress, it was after the unexpected death of my husband, my love, Charles Rochester. His death shook me to the core, but then I ran into a father in front of me in the grocery store, who had to put back grapes because they were \$9. In that moment, I realized I was still alive, and I had more to give.

I ran for office, having never run for anything in my life, and our small but mighty State made history in 2016 and sent me here, to the room where it happens, to deliver for Delaware.

It is their voices, their stories, and their concerns that have informed my work each and every day, from advocating for a strong farm bill, to protecting our coastal communities, to supporting the Dover Air Force Base and the Port of Wilmington, to bringing clean drinking water to communities like Ellendale, and to fighting for small businesses hit hard by a pandemic and broken supply chains.

I worked across the aisle. We passed bipartisan legislation to help support families, strengthen our communities, lower costs, and protect our national security.

However, not every day in this room has been filled with progress. People almost always ask me what my worst day as a Member of Congress was. Indelibly etched in my mind is that spot in the gallery where I was trapped on January 6, a day when insurrectionists attacked this temple of democracy, and I prayed for love over hate and hope over fear.

As terrible as that day was, it was also one of my proudest moments because we came back into this Chamber, and we fulfilled our constitutional duty and carried out the will of the people.

At that moment, I recommitted to this work, to our democracy, and a hope for a brighter future. Let me be clear: The race to liberty and justice is not over. In running it, we must remember the saying: "The race is not given to the swift, nor to the strong, but to the one that endures."

If we are to build a democracy, a planet, and a future that endures, it will take each and every one of us doing our part.

In closing, to all of my colleagues and friends, to the incredible staff in this room and in the Cloakroom and in the building, thank you so much for your friendship and support.

To my dedicated staff members who have been on this journey with me every step of the way, I could not have done it without you.

To my family, thank you for your unyielding love and support through it all.

To my late father, Ted Blunt, thank you for showing me the true meaning of service. Dad once said: You become what you see unless you see what you want to become.

Dad, in you, I still see what I want to become.

Finally, to the countless Delawareans who have entrusted me with the responsibility of this office and the next, I am honored, grateful, and ready to serve.

In the words of Hamilton: "There's a million things I haven't done, but just you wait."

FINAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. LATURNER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address this body for the last time.

I have always felt immense gratitude for God's blessings in my life, but since deciding not to seek reelection last spring, that gratitude has only deepened.

As a son of Kansas, I am guided by our State motto, "ad astra per aspera," "to the stars through difficulties."

It is a truth I have seen lived out in my own family, generation after generation. My grandmother dropped out of school in the ninth grade because she had only one dress and could no longer endure the ridicule of her classmates. Yet, after raising six children, she returned to school, earned her GED, and became a nurse. This was a testament to her resilience.

My grandfather, the eldest of the six siblings, faced his own struggles. After losing his father at the age of 18, he became the first in our family to graduate from high school. He served his country in Korea, where he lost sight in one eye. Unable to pass a physical, he worked odd jobs until he found his calling in public service, becoming a lay judge in our county.

My father continued this legacy of determination. As a single parent, he worked long hours managing the local Sonic while putting himself through college. He became the first in our family to earn a degree, going on to serve as an educator and later as the mayor of our hometown, Galena, Kansas.

I share these stories, Madam Speaker, because they remind me every day that I did not get here on my own.

To put a finer point on it, my grandfather's father was killed in the mines at the age of 41, leaving behind a widow and six hungry children. They endured hardships most of us cannot fathom. Yet, three short generations later, his great-grandson was called "the gentleman from Kansas" on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

What a country this is.