

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.

□ 1015

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.

It is not just my story. It is the American story. It is the story of what is possible in this extraordinary country when opportunity is paired with sacrifice, when freedom is protected, and when institutions like this one work to preserve that dream for those yet to come.

This Chamber, at its best, exists to ensure that the ladder my family climbed remains sturdy and strong for future generations. I am confident that, in the 119th Congress, we will take up that charge, improving our economy, securing our border, making our streets safer, and showing true American leadership on the world stage.

I humbly offer two parting suggestions.

When I first arrived here, I visited then-dean of the House, Don Young. He told me that when he arrived in 1973, it was customary for freshman Members to wait 6 months before speaking on the House floor. To his surprise, I adopted this tradition.

I did so partly out of deference to the dean, but mostly because it showed respect for this institution, an institution and a system of government that our Founders painstakingly designed to safeguard against human nature. It is all of our responsibility to protect and preserve it.

My second suggestion concerns our role on the world stage. We must be thrifty, strategic, and we must never outsource our sovereignty, but we still have a critical role.

One small but impactful example is preventing children from dying of starvation. Ready-to-use therapeutic food, or RUTF, is an American-made, nutrient-dense paste that has saved millions of lives across the globe. The State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee increased funding by \$300 million while reducing overall spending by over 10 percent, and this body passed it. That increase should be realized. It is the right thing to do.

I thank Tim Shallenburger; Mark Dugan; Sam Brownback; Lynn Jenkins; Jake Conard; and Braden Dreiling, my chief; and all of my staff, past and present, for serving both our district and this institution so ably.

I thank the people of Kansas from the bottom of my heart for trusting me to represent them in the State senate as State treasurer and in Congress.

Most importantly, I thank my friends, both at home and my colleagues here. They are my supporters who helped me get here.

I also thank my family. I especially thank my grandparents who helped raise me; my dad; my brother; my sister; my wife, Suzanne; and our four children, Ava, Joe, Maggie, and Gus, who are here with me today, for joining me on this journey and for their incredible sacrifices.

To my kids, the best title I have ever had is "Dad," and that title is about to get my full attention.

Above all, I thank God for his blessings on my life, my family, and this Nation.

Madam Speaker, the future is bright, and for the last time I yield back.

RECOGNIZING FERNANDO "FREDDIE" SANCHEZ

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Fernando "Freddie" Sanchez, born on October 9, 1946, in Mexico, D.F.

Freddie was raised in Mexico's border state of Baja, California, spending most of his early years in the cities of Mexicali, Ensenada, and Tijuana, before he made his way to the United States.

Freddie Sanchez is like many of the thousands of brave young Latino men and women who have answered the call when our country has needed them the most. Freddie Sanchez's military service spanned from 1968 to 1970. He spent 5 months training in the old U.S. Army post at Fort Ord, California.

Freddie saw military action in Vietnam, spending a year in the Army's Long Binh Post near Saigon. He served the remaining 7 months in Fort Carson, Colorado.

Freddie Sanchez was designated military occupational specialty 88. He was part of the transportation specialists. Freddie drove 10-ton Army trucks and had the honor of driving the company commander.

As Freddie often reminds us that nothing good comes easy, but thanks to the Army, he was well trained and was able to succeed.

Following his military service, Freddie worked 50 years for Lockheed Martin, first as a mechanic and machinist, and then as a foreman. Freddie enjoyed going to work every day. He felt his job was more like a hobby.

One of the impressive things he got to accomplish was working on the Pathfinder, where his name, along with his colleagues, is recorded forever on a tiny disc.

His career at Lockheed allowed him to buy a home in Panama City, California. In 1972, Freddie married his soulmate, Lerina, and they are celebrating 52 years of marriage.

Freddie and Lerina are blessed with three children, Fernando Jr., Nancy, and Sergio. Today, their family has grown to include 8 grandchildren, 12 stepgrandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.

Norma and I have enjoyed the counsel of Freddie and his support throughout the years. It is now in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that I thank Freddie Sanchez for his service and love of country and for being an honorable family man and an upstanding citizen.

HONORING STEPHEN "STEVE" BOTSFORD

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a successful businessman, philanthropist, and a good friend, Stephen "Steve" Botsford.

A midwesterner through and through, Steve Botsford was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and raised in Plymouth, Indiana.

Steve grew up just 29 miles from South Bend, Indiana, and he always dreamed of attending the University of Notre Dame. However, his father told him that school was for rich, smart, Catholic kids, and he was none of those things.

Steve never let that deter him. Steve believed in himself. His perseverance and hard work paid off. In 1972, Steve graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a B.A. in business management. He received his juris doctorate 3 years later from the University of Notre Dame Law School.

After his days in South Bend, Steve spent 2 years working for one of the Big 5 accounting firms of that time before realizing he wasn't meant to have a boss.

He then went out on his own, spending most of his early career helping small businesses finance equipment purchases after their local banks had denied them.

□ 1030

After a successful career as a CPA, Steve delved into real estate development and founded Laurel Canyon Holdings. Steve developed a project in the San Fernando Valley and that is where our paths would cross.

I have gotten to know Steve Botsford since my days on the Los Angeles City Council, and I have seen Steve's commitment to his business, philanthropy, and his beautiful, wonderful family.

In 1985, Steve Botsford married Kathleen Dickerson, and they are celebrating 39 years of marriage. They are blessed with three beautiful children: Alexandria, Steve, and Victoria.

Madam Speaker, I thank Steve Botsford for his integrity, love, and generosity. We all know the saying, "to know you is to love you," and many blessings have come to many of us because we have gotten to know Steve Botsford, and we do love him. I thank him for everything that he has done for our country and for what he has done for our communities.

I will also point out that, although Steve Botsford has raised his family in Chicago and that has been his home for decades, Steve Botsford has adopted many, many programs around the country and has been a tremendous philanthropist.

I will mention one of them in particular. The Cardenas Foundation was founded after my mother and father, two humble people, came from Mexico and raised 11 children to go on to college and many other successful things. Steve Botsford has contributed over half a million dollars to give scholarships to mostly first-generation college students. That is just one example of Steve's generosity.