

As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and co-founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus, I believe that riders have the right to affordable and environmentally responsible transit options like Pace to get to their jobs, schools, and homes.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Pace's future innovations, improvements, and expansion of services, and I congratulate them on their 40th anniversary.

RECOGNIZING MEMBERS LEAVING HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a few of my distinguished colleagues on the House Committee on Agriculture. These colleagues have been invaluable teammates in our fight for America's farmers and ranchers, but they are also colleagues who will be moving on to other adventures next year.

First, the gentleman from Missouri, MARK ALFORD, representing the Fourth District, is a former news anchor and now the host of "MARK ALFORD's America" radio show. Congressman ALFORD is a megaphone for Missouri's number one industry, agriculture.

I was fortunate enough to visit the Missouri State Fair with Mr. ALFORD last year, and I know that he will continue to be a fighter for America's farmers and ranchers.

Next is Congresswoman LORI CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR from Oregon's First District. Congresswoman CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR graciously hosted the Agriculture Committee in her district for one of our farm bill listening sessions, which provided us with critical producer input crucial to the drafting of the committee's farm bill.

Tapped by President Trump to serve as the next Secretary of Labor, I know she will do great things, and I wish Congresswoman CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR the very best.

Congressman JOHN DUARTE brought his firsthand experience as a California farmer to our committee in a pivotal year for our Nation's farmers and ranchers. In what some have called a perfect poster child for the regulatory issues we need fixed, Mr. DUARTE came in the crosshairs of the Obama administration's regulatory state due to the overreaching "waters of the United States" definition.

In a way only possible in America, Mr. DUARTE ultimately earned a spot in Congress and a seat on the Agriculture Committee, where he was able to vote to rescind the Biden administration's flawed WOTUS rule. We will miss having him on our committee, and I wish him the best.

Next, Congressman MAX MILLER has been a real fighter for Ohio's agricultural industry. During his time on the committee, we traveled to listening

sessions together, and I joined his agricultural advisory board calls. He has been a constant champion for our producers. He even became a father.

As he leaves the Agriculture Committee, I know Mr. MILLER will continue to advocate for the Buckeye State's farmers through his work on the Ways and Means Committee.

From upstate New York's 19th District, Congressman MARC MOLINARO immediately brought a unique perspective to the Agriculture Committee. Too often, the Halls of Congress seem stuck in the ways of the past, but Mr. MOLINARO taught us to think differently. He was a fierce advocate for the farmers and producers from New York, and we will miss having him behind the dais.

I can't forget my friends on the other side of the aisle, either. The Agriculture Committee has a rich history of bipartisanship that started long before my chairmanship and will hopefully continue long into the future.

Congresswoman CARAVEO from Colorado's Eighth District, Congresswoman SLOTKIN from Michigan's Seventh District, and Congresswoman SPANBERGER from Virginia's Seventh District are bidding farewell to the Agriculture Committee. Each represented their diverse communities with distinction on our committee, and I want to wish each of them the very best.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my friend and brother in Christ, the current ranking member, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT), who is not retiring but rather stepping down as ranking member.

Since 2021, Congressman SCOTT has led the Democrats on the Agriculture Committee with distinction.

Agriculture really is not and never should be a partisan issue. In fact, it is one of the few that still unites Members from very different political backgrounds.

I am proud of the fact we have been able to find common ground on so many issues over the years. I look forward to continuing to work across the aisle with Mr. SCOTT, and I thank him for his service to the Agriculture Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of our colleagues for their contributions to American agriculture and wish them good luck in their next chapters.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE EARL BLUMENAUER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, for many people across the country, their first introduction to Portland, Oregon, was the sketch comedy show "Portlandia." Like any parody, it exaggerates reality. Contrary to popular belief, most Portlanders don't spend their time asking about a chicken's backstory at a farm-to-table restaurant and sorting their recycling into 50 bins.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you firsthand that the City of Roses is a place where people care about the environment, where their food comes from, sustainable transportation, and inclusive communities. There is no better advocate and no truer representative of Portland than my good friend, colleague, and mentor, Congressman EARL BLUMENAUER.

EARL has been in public service for more than 50 years, 28 years here in Congress and 25 years in State and local government. He has devoted his career to making Oregon and the country more livable so individuals and families can be safe, healthy, and economically secure. As he has said, it is in his DNA to care about the community and to bring people together to accomplish a goal.

EARL came to Congress after a special election in April 1996 when RON WYDEN moved to the Senate in one of five special elections that year. On the Hill, people know EARL by his bow ties, bike pins, and annual comedy events, but to those of us who know him well, he is so much more.

EARL has a wide breadth of knowledge and extensive expertise gathered through his years in State and local government and now in Congress. When I went on a tour of the Library of Congress several years ago, I noticed how quiet and empty it was. When I asked if any Members of Congress actually use the Library, my tour guide asked: Do you know EARL BLUMENAUER?

That is EARL. As former Congressman Peter DeFazio remarked, EARL goes to people with facts, and he goes back to them with facts, and he tries to wear them down.

EARL can be very convincing. He is a long-term thinker, a skill that is sometimes in short supply in the policymaking arena, and a quintessential policy wonk.

EARL's vision and tireless work have made real, game-changing progress for his hometown of Portland and for our State, for the region, for the Nation, and, in fact, around the world. He has been a key part of promoting curbside recycling; investing in bike and pedestrian infrastructure; advocating for animal welfare, transit, and water infrastructure; supporting Afghan interpreters; changing the regulatory structure of cannabis; reimagining food policy; and more.

EARL always seeks to share what he knows. As a Portland city commissioner, EARL wanted to provide a way for Portland residents to engage constructively with the transportation system, so he created an evening class to give people the opportunity to learn about the system and suggest changes, a program that continues to this day at Portland State University.

When new Members come to Congress, EARL welcomes them with a gift, a very thorough, multipage letter sharing some of his lessons and some of the knowledge that he has absorbed throughout his service. I came back to

that letter, and to EARL, for guidance as I found my way. Even Snoop Dogg asked EARL for advice on how he could help with cannabis legislation.

Yes, EARL has friends everywhere, and I know many of us in Congress will miss him tremendously when he retires at the end of the 118th Congress, but for those of us who live, work, and visit Portland, EARL is not going anywhere. In his next role in Portland State's metropolitan studies program, he will continue to make things better for Oregonians with his typical thoughtful, methodical, and data-informed approach.

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As the incoming dean of the Oregon delegation, I acknowledge that I have big shoes to fill, but EARL has charted a good and worthy path, and I know he will be around for advice when we need his wisdom, his sense of humor, and his sincerity about creating a better future.

We wish EARL BLUMENAUER well, and I know he will appreciate his additional time with his wife, Margaret, and his children and grandchildren.

Congress will not be the same without Congressman EARL BLUMENAUER.

FAREWELL FOR NOW

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, imagine winning a war for a country that didn't yet exist and had no government. That was our beginning.

What our Founders did have was freedom-loving people who believed that our rights come from God. There were 13 independent Colonies that united for a common purpose to form the United States of America. Eventually, they formed three branches of government: the executive, judicial, and legislative. Here we are in this beautiful Chamber right now.

Growing up, I watched "Superman," and each show began with the motto: Fighting for "truth, justice, and the American way." I bought in, and I truly believe that most of America does, as well.

At a young age, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. I didn't imagine that that would lead to military and legislative careers as well. That is my version of the American Dream, I suppose.

I have loved every chapter, not knowing that they all would overlap, and, on occasion, God would put me right where I could serve best. Sometimes he would perform miracles: Long live Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE, an American hero.

When one chapter ends, another chapter begins. With the priorities of God, family, and country in mind, I will return home to further elevate my roles as husband, father, coach, and provider, while God, family, and country are all still priorities.

I cherish all the great Americans who I have served with along the way.

Thanks for keeping me company. I have been blessed.

My wife, Monica; and my children, Brad and Sophia, are my blessings, as well.

Farewell for now. God bless all of you, and God bless the United States of America.

END PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING ONCE AND FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, as my term in Congress ends, I express my heartfelt gratitude to those who made it possible: the people of North Carolina. Representing North Carolina's 13th District has been the honor of a lifetime.

I am proud of the impact our office has had over the past 2 years. We have helped more than 1,600 constituents resolve issues with Federal agencies, returning nearly \$2.8 million to my constituents in the process. We have hosted and attended nearly 300 public events, including 16 townhalls, to connect with our neighbors and make their voices heard in Washington.

We responded to over 70,000 pieces of correspondence, ensuring that every constituent knew that their voice mattered, and we brought back millions through the Federal budget to North Carolina's 13th District.

Legislatively, we have worked to make life better for the people we served. I introduced 13 bills and cosponsored over 450 pieces of legislation, fighting for affordable healthcare, safer schools, better infrastructure, and an economy that works for everyone. I took to this floor 70 times to advocate for my district's priorities and to share their stories with the American people.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a normal farewell speech. I am not giving this speech by choice. As someone who first came to Congress 30 years ago as an intern for Senator Dianne Feinstein, I can guarantee one thing: Nobody has truly loved serving in Congress more than me.

That is, in part, because we knew there was a good chance that my district would be erased by partisan gerrymandering and my time here would be short. I had a lot of work to do in a short amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here giving a farewell speech because I did a bad job or because my constituents voted for another candidate. I am here because of partisan gerrymandering by far-right extremists in the North Carolina General Assembly.

The fair, Republican-leaning district that sent me to Congress was erased last year with the stroke of a pen. The people of North Carolina and across the country deserve better. They deserve fair maps, a fair system, and a democracy that they can trust. People should choose their politicians, not the other way around.

I will continue to fight with every ounce of my energy for fair maps and an end to partisan gerrymandering.

Mr. Speaker, as we leave this week, we will be the least-productive Congress in our Nation's history going back to 1860, and that is because of extreme partisan gerrymandering. It provides no incentive to work together.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end partisan gerrymandering once and for all.

I thank the people of North Carolina's 13th District for trusting me to be your voice in Congress. Serving has been the greatest honor of my life. I am not giving up or going out quietly, and I will always remain committed to working for a brighter future for North Carolina.

To my family, my wife, Caroline; and my kids, Prescott and Adeline, your love and support mean everything to me. Public service is never a solo effort. It is a family commitment. It is a team effort. I love you all so much, and I am so grateful for you. I am very excited to return back to Cary for Christmas.

I also thank my amazing staff. Their hard work and dedication ensured that we delivered for the people we served. I acknowledge their contributions by submitting their names to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Thank you so much to the best team in the business.

To my Democratic colleagues from North Carolina, it has been a true honor to serve with ALMA ADAMS, DEBORAH ROSS, and KATHY MANNING. While not with us in this Congress, David Price and G.K. Butterfield are absolutely part of the team for North Carolina in the House. I especially thank VALERIE FOUSHEE, DON DAVIS, and JEFF JACKSON for their partnership, friendship, and outstanding leadership for North Carolina.

Going back to our time serving together in the North Carolina Senate, all four of us served in the senate together and came here in this freshman class. It has been a true honor to serve with all of them.

I also mention the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) on the Republican side. He led the Financial Services Committee. We worked hard together in a bipartisan way on FIT 21, the first-ever crypto bill to be voted on in the U.S. Congress.

I am proud of the effort to bring 71 Democrats together. That is how legislation is supposed to work: working together in a bipartisan way. That, for me, was a bright spot for this Congress.

I thank my colleagues, especially my fellow freshmen, for their friendship and collaboration. Working alongside them has been a true honor.

We ended this term with an amazing dinner together last night. Their passion and determination remind me of why we do this work, and I am grateful for the lifelong friendships we have built.

I know I am leaving the future of the U.S. Congress in very good hands. Public service is about making a difference. It is about putting others first