

SUPPORTING AUTOMATIC ORGAN
DONATION REFERRALS**HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of studying the implementation of automated software tools that will improve and expedite the organ donation referral process.

The United States has one of the best organ donation and transplantation systems in the world. Still, over 100,000 Americans remain on the national waitlist for an organ transplant. Just one organ donor can save as many as eight lives, which is why we must ensure the process for identifying and evaluating potential deceased organ donors is as efficient and accurate as possible.

Hospitals are currently required to notify their collaborating organ procurement organization (OPO) of all imminent patient deaths in a timely manner to ensure they can maximize the number of organs recovered for transplant. The standard practice of hospital staff manually identifying patients to refer to donation, and then manually notifying OPOs of those patients, is not only time consuming and burdensome for busy hospital staff but increases the likelihood of human error missing a potential donor.

Today, automated electronic deceased organ donor referral systems exist at a select few hospitals. These systems automate the donor referral process, allowing hospital staff more time to focus on direct patient care, minimizing the risk of human error, and potentially increasing the number of organs available for transplant.

I am proud to have introduced the bipartisan Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act to help remove barriers to the national adoption of automated electronic organ donor referrals in health systems so we can give hope to patients waiting for the gift of life.

The Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act would authorize a voluntary study of the current use of automated electronic deceased organ donor referral technology across the Nation. This study will allow us to identify the best practices for the use of such technology and develop informed recommendations for its broad adoption.

The following organizations support the Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act: United Network for Organ Sharing, Association of Organ Procurement Organizations, National Kidney Foundation, American Kidney Fund, Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, American Society of Transplantation, American Society of Nephrology, American Society of Transplant Surgeons, American Liver Foundation, American Nephrology Nurses Association, North American Transplant Coordinators Association, American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics, American Association of Kidney Patients, Waitlist Zero, Kidney Transplant Collaborative, LifeNet Health, Gift of Life Donor Program, Gift of Hope, Infinite Legacy, Association of Multicultural Affairs in Transplantation, Transplant Families, LifeCenter Northwest, Life Connection of Ohio, LifeBanc, HonorBridge, One Legacy, New Jersey Sharing Network, Lifesharing Donate Life Organization, LifeGift, LifeQuest

Organ Recovery Services, and Lifeline of Ohio.

I would like to thank the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) for being a steadfast partner on this critical issue. UNOS is a mission-driven non-profit that has led the United States' Organ Procurement and Transplant Network for nearly 40 years. UNOS employees have a significant and consistent impact on the Greater Richmond Region area, and I am proud to have so many passionate constituents in my district who work every day to support our Nation's organ donation and transplant system. UNOS continues to lead efforts to improve the system, including advocating for the importance of automated electronic deceased donor referrals. I thank them for their work to promote the gift of life through organ donation and transplantation.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you rise with me to honor the work being done to advance the automatic organ donor referral programs across the Nation.

HONORING WWII VETERAN RICHARD REARDON ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the extraordinary life and service of Private First-Class Richard F. Reardon of Bemus Point, New York, as he celebrates his 100th birthday.

During World War II, Richard Reardon served with the 245th Port Company in the Pacific Theater. His service took him from training camps in the United States to the jungles and beaches of New Guinea and Luzon, where he played a vital role in unloading critical supplies for Allied forces. Richard was among a group of 10 soldiers from the Jamestown area, affectionately known as the "Jamestonians" who remarkably stayed together throughout much of their deployment.

For his courageous service, Richard was awarded numerous commendations, including the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon with Bronze Stars, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal, the Arrowhead Victory Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. His dedication and sacrifice are a testament to the bravery and resilience of the Greatest Generation.

Today, as we celebrate Richard Reardon's 100th birthday, we honor his service to our Nation and his lasting legacy. On behalf of New York's 23rd Congressional District, I extend my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to Richard and his family on this monumental occasion.

HONORING THE LIFE WILLIAM
"BILL" LESTER SPRUILL, JR.**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible life and legacy of Wil-

liam "Bill" Lester Spruill, Jr., a brilliant man who left us peacefully on January 18, 2025.

Born and raised in New Haven, Bill was a lifelong public servant, member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and proud veteran who was exceptionally passionate and determined to make the world a better place for all.

Shortly after graduating from James Hillhouse High School in 1953, Bill enlisted in the Marine Corps and received the honorable rank of Sergeant. His career after serving our country began at Pratt and Whitney where he worked as a machine operator.

Bill continued his passion for serving his country by working for various initiatives in Connecticut's public sector. Bill was a housing specialist at the Redevelopment Agency, Executive Director of the Commission on Equal Opportunities for the City of New Haven, and finished his successful career as an Affirmative Action Administrator of the State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services. In these roles, he continued to fight for the greater good and helped improve the lives of thousands in our community and beyond.

Even after retirement, Bill continued to work by assisting others as a volunteer at the Hospital of Saint Raphael's for fifteen years—this is just one example of how passionate Bill was to help those around him. Bill had a presence in this world that lifted others up, making everyone feel loved and supported. If you knew Bill, you would know he believed in serving his community and always being there.

My heart and my prayers are with his family, loved ones, and friends, and I know that he will always be remembered for making Connecticut a better place.

RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 16, 2025,
AS NATIONAL ALMOND DAY**HON. ADAM GRAY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. GRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, joined by my colleagues, to recognize February 16, 2025, as National Almond Day.

This day serves as an opportunity to celebrate the incredible contributions made by almond farmers, processors, workers, and all those whose dedication sustains this vital industry. National Almond Day shines a light on the remarkable achievements and innovations that have made the almond industry a cornerstone of our agricultural economy and a source of pride for our nation.

Almonds, often hailed as a nutritional powerhouse, offer an array of health benefits. They are a naturally gluten-free, shelf-stable protein, packed with essential nutrients like healthy fats, fiber, vitamin E, calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, and niacin. Almonds are known to promote heart health, support healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and contribute to radiant skin and overall well-being. Few foods can claim such a combination of health benefits and versatility.

Beyond their nutrition, almonds are an essential ingredient in countless recipes and culinary traditions. Whether enjoyed as a wholesome snack or incorporated into baking and cooking, almonds have become a staple in households nationwide, adding flavor, texture, and nourishment to our meals.

The almond industry also exemplifies environmental stewardship. Almond orchards play a significant role in carbon sequestration, storing an impressive 30 million metric tons of carbon annually. Over the past three decades, almond farmers have made tremendous strides in water conservation, reducing water usage by nearly 50 percent through advanced practices and precision irrigation technology. Furthermore, the industry is committed to sustainability, utilizing every part of the almond—from the nut to the shell and hull—in a zero-waste approach that benefits the environment and strengthens the industry's resilience.

California, my home state, is the proud heart of this industry. Home to 7,600 almond farms, most of which are family-owned and operated by multi-generational farmers, California leads the world in almond production. These dedicated farmers embody the values of hard work, innovation, and community, preserving farmland and fostering sustainable practices for future generations.

The almond industry's economic impact is profound. It supports 110,000 jobs in California and contributes \$9.2 billion annually to the state's economy. California's almond farmers supply 100 percent of the almonds in the United States and 80 percent of the world's almond supply, cementing our role as a global leader in almond production. That is why I proudly carried state legislation in 2017 to name almonds as California's official state nut.

On this National Almond Day, we honor the hardworking men and women whose efforts ensure that almonds remain a nutritious and sustainable staple on tables around the world. Their innovation and dedication inspire us all and remind us of the vital connection between agriculture and our shared prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in celebrating National Almond Day and in recognizing the profound contributions of almond farmers and all those who make this industry a shining example of American ingenuity and resilience.

May National Almond Day continue to inspire appreciation for the many ways the almond industry enriches our lives and strengthens our communities.

RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, WORLD WAR II VETERAN CHUCK KUNES'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional constituent from my district, Chuck Kunes. Throughout his life, Chuck has embodied a selfless and fearless spirit, resulting in a life rich in stories and memories. I commend Chuck for his service to our country and thank him for his great sacrifices and honorable legacy. As he celebrates his 100th birthday on February 27, 2025, I would like to recognize Chuck and wish happiness for him and his family.

Chuck was born in Trenton, New Jersey to Jewish immigrants Sam and Doris (Weinstock) Kunes on February 27, 1925. He attended schools in Trenton and the Bronx and worked shining shoes to help support his family when his father passed away suddenly in 1935, when Chuck was only ten years old. At age 18, before he could be drafted for World War II, Chuck enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, attended boot camp in North Carolina, and then went to flight school in Maine, where he was trained as a flight mechanic.

He was then sent to the South Pacific as part of VMF-214, most famously known as the "Black Sheep Squadron," where he spent four years in Okinawa and China, attaining the rank of Sergeant. Following the service, Chuck attended the University of Illinois on the G.I. Bill, then moved to Levittown, Pennsylvania and spent the remainder of his life in Bucks County. He worked as an executive for the 3-M Company in Bristol for over 40 years.

Chuck was an original owner in the Stony Brook section of Levittown, eventually moving to Quincy Hollow and then, finally, to Forsythia Gate, where he cared for his wife, Alma, and three children, Karen, Steven and Susan. To date, Chuck and Alma have been married for 71 years.

Chuck has spent a lifetime enjoying fishing, hunting, baking, and as a private pilot. Chuck also loves his visits to Parx Casino. His family is so very proud that Chuck has reached this milestone in his life. Our Nation owes Chuck a debt that can never be repaid. We wish Chuck countless blessings, and I remain deeply appreciative of Chuck Kunes for his life of service and sacrifice for our community, district, and country. His commitment to his fellow neighbors, veterans, and servicemembers

alike is a testament to his character and spirit. I am more than honored to recognize him today and wish him nothing but the best for his 100th birthday and the future beyond.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF RONNIE RASMUSSEN, U.S. ARMY STAFF SEARGENT AND FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Staff Sergeant Ronnie Rasmussen, a resident of St. Cloud, Florida, graduated from Osceola High School in 1983 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy, completing Aviation Machinist Mate training and serving at NAS Miramar and NAS Oceana. He reached the rank of Petty Officer Third Class before completing his service in 1987.

In 2008, inspired by a conversation with a coworker, he joined the Army Reserve, training as a unit supply specialist and later as a cargo specialist. Over the years, he served in multiple roles, including Drill Sergeant Company Member, Military Police, and Operations NCO.

In 2014, he deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. Rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant, he took on leadership roles in supply, security, and training. In 2023, he transferred to the 76th Expeditionary Terminal Operations Element for a final deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Spartan Shield. In March 2025, he will retire from the U.S. Army Reserve after nearly 23 years of combined service.

Parallel to his military career, Rasmussen had a distinguished law enforcement career. He worked as a police officer in St. Cloud, Florida, and as a detective with the Osceola County Sheriff's Office, investigating crimes against tourists. In 1998, he joined the State Fire Marshal's Office, investigating over 100 fires annually.

Following the 9/11 attacks, he became a Federal Air Marshal in 2002, flying over five million miles and conducting international security operations. He also contributed to the VIPR program, enhancing security at transit locations nationwide.

After 23 years as a Federal Air Marshal and nearly 40 years in law enforcement, Rasmussen will retire on March 28, 2025, to spend well-earned time with his family, having sacrificed countless birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays in service of his country.