

community, Marine Casualty Investigator, Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner, Port State Control Officer, Foreign Tank Vessel Inspector, Explosive Handling Supervisor, Federal On-Scene Coordinator Representative, Pollution Investigator, Facility and Security Inspector, and Collateral Duty Intelligence Officer. He skillfully led and assisted numerous search and rescue missions, environmental protection operations, and vessel casualty responses, safeguarding lives, property, and the marine environment. His quick thinking and calm under pressure have saved dozens of lives and mitigated multiple disasters contributing immeasurable benefit to the overall health and safety of our beautiful islands. He has led multiple workshops and training programs to pass on his wide breadth of knowledge and prepare the next generation of maritime officers. His work in the community has also had a strong humanitarian benefit demonstrating strong Samoan cultural values of service and compassion.

Mr. Thomsen's personal military decorations are highlighted by two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, four Coast Guard Commandant's Letter of Commendation, and eight Meritorious Coast Guard Team Awards. Mr. Thomsen's enduring contributions reflect his deep commitment to the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. His legacy is one of steadfast leadership, selfless service, and unwavering dedication to the safety and well-being of the maritime community in American Samoa and the surrounding islands. He will spend his well-deserved retirement with his wife, Denise Loretta Thomsen, his children, Vitoriao'a'ana and Frank III, and with the gratitude of the American Samoan people. His retirement ceremony will be held on January 14, 2025.

HONORING MIKE BYRNE

HON. CLIFF BENTZ

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning along with Congressman LAMALFA to honor a constituent for his decades of selfless advocacy on behalf of his family, his community, and his fellow farmers and ranchers.

Throughout a life of tireless work on his family's legacy cattle ranch with origins reaching back to the founding decades of two states, Mike Byrne has gone above and beyond at home in the Klamath Basin and around the country to support his community and enhance the legacy created by his family.

Mr. Byrne's family first came to the Klamath Basin in the 1860's, developing large-scale ranching operations on hundreds of thousands of then unclaimed acres in Klamath County, Oregon, and Modoc County, California. The family has a personal relationship with the Klamath Project since its inception, as the initial holdings of Jesse Carr were taken via eminent domain by the federal government for the construction of the Clear Lake Reservoir after the Klamath Project was authorized in 1902. Remaining acres that once comprised the initial family holdings are still grazed seasonally as an integral part of the summer cattle operations under cooperative management with

the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mike's grandfather W.C. Dalton moved the family from Clear Lake to the shore of the receding Tule Lake and was instrumental in building the D Canal to bring water from Klamath Lake to that area. Dalton sold virgin land to Czech immigrant families—many of whom still are farming—who cleared and planted the area as water was initially delivered and supported the founding of the town of Malin, Oregon.

Mike was born in 1951 to Bob and Betty Lou Byrne. He attended Newell Elementary School and, like all his siblings, was sent on a train at 13 years old to boarding school in California. While attending Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose, California, Mike met his wife Bev at a sophomore mixer. We'd like to congratulate the two on the 50th wedding anniversary they celebrated last year, and for their two grown children Matt and Brianna—each of whom have two grade school boys and help on the family ranch as well.

While attending University of California, Davis, Mike earned a degree in animal science and returned home to help on the ranch any chance he could. He moved home permanently in 1973 to work with his parents and siblings, with his years of school representing the only time he lived away from the ranch. At home, Mike's demonstration of leading by example on the ranch have garnered many treasured long-term employees; integral individuals he has supported and who have supported him for decades.

Mike was happy working the ranch, but in the early 1980's, at the urging of family friend and ranching industry leader Rob Flournoy, Mike was encouraged to pursue what became decades of involvement, volunteerism and support for the agricultural community on three key fronts: supporting agricultural water supply and rights, sustaining public lands grazing and supporting conservation as part of a working agricultural business.

Mike initially became involved in the Modoc County Cattlemen's Association, volunteered heavily, moved through all the officer chairs and was named Cattleman of the Year in 1992. He continued his advocacy at the California Cattlemen's Association, serving as public lands committee chairman (a position he likely held for longer than any other in the organization's history) and Second Vice President from 1989 through 1991. He was also a long-time President of the California Public Lands Council. Balancing his volunteer work with daily needs on the ranch—including the fact that his father was confined to a wheelchair—Mike chose not to accept the offer to move up further in the organization at the time but remained heavily involved.

Mike was exceptionally involved in the fallout from the galvanizing 2001 Klamath water shut off. That event set off a frenzy of activity in the community and Mike participated meaningfully and wholeheartedly, taking dozens of trips to Washington, D.C.—where he was on a first name basis with multiple cabinet secretaries and influenced countless staffers of all political stripes with his unique, disarming sense of humor, participating in countless tours and hearings with federal officials and the media and acting as a principal organizer of The Klamath Bucket Brigade. Mike knew the efforts made by so many at that time were significant and meaningful and he was honored to play a role.

In addition to his role as an advocate during the water shut off, Mike was deeply involved closer to home as Chairman of the Lava Beds Resource Conservation District, which helped to quickly and efficiently distribute relief funding to a reeling local farming community that was suddenly not sure if they would ever farm again. Fortunately, the water has come back on, but, unfortunately, efforts to secure real certainty for the community continue to this day.

He later became deeply involved in the National Cattleman's Beef Association, where he ascended to a national position as Policy Chairman in 2004, and the national Public Lands Council, where he served as President from 2004 to 2006. From those national positions he represented cattle producers in all 50 states, but he always kept his eye on the West and his heart in the Basin.

In addition to leadership roles and meetings, the Byrne family has spent many days in the field demonstrating conservation leadership. Mike and his brother Dan were recognized with the National Resources Conservation Service's nationwide Excellence in Conservation Award in 2004 and the Society for Range Management with the Excellence in Range Management award in 1998. They were also featured in two editions of the conservation ranching publication, *Grazing for Change*. Mike was proud to participate not for personal accolades, but to demonstrate to a wide range of stakeholders the positive possibilities of successful working landscape management and wildlife. Along those lines, he was also very proud of his role in relocating and releasing breeding pairs of sage grouse from Nevada to lekking areas near the original family headquarters that are still grazed annually by the Byrne family.

Mike continues to selflessly attribute the success of his efforts to being blessed with the right history, the right connections, and being in the right place at the right time. Fair enough, but then we can all count ourselves lucky that he took advantage.

While we see hundreds of committed advocates in my office each year, there are two things that make Mike unique.

First is the longevity and breadth of his service. While many people join a single organization and pass through leadership then retire, Mike's willingness to remain involved in multiple organizations providing counsel and support after his term as leader has ended is truly remarkable. He remains Chairman of the local RCD and has just recently completed many terms as board member at the Klamath Water Users Association and the Public Lands Council.

Second is his willingness to stand back from the limelight and deflect credit to others at all times while maintaining consistently good, or if you know Mike very well, you might say great humor—even if you don't quite get it. By being willing to work hard and support the community in bringing diverse groups together without caring who got the credit, Mike followed one of former President Ronald Reagan's political rules and was able to accomplish much.

We thank Mike for his many efforts and his continued support to this day and we stand with the community in saying we appreciate what he has done and thank him for what he continues to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to share with my colleagues and the Nation, my regard for an outstanding American.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
JOSIAH ADAMS

HON. SUZAN K. DeLBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the remarkable service of Josiah Adams, who has been an invaluable member of my team since March of 2023. During his tenure in our office, his contributions have made a significant impact.

Josiah quickly became known for his unmatched attention to detail and his can-do attitude. No job was too small, as he consistently went above and beyond to support our office. He always brought a sense of positivity that uplifted those around him. His quick and creative thinking were invaluable assets, ensuring seamless operations both within and beyond our office.

Josiah has shown a strong dedication to public service, and I know that will stay with him as he moves on to new opportunities. I want to thank him for his hard work, his optimism, and the lasting contributions he has made to our team. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Josiah Adams and wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING CHAFFEE COUNTY
COMMISSIONER KEITH BAKER

HON. BRITTANY PETERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Keith Baker of Chaffee County, Colorado for his service to the people of Salida, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs on the Chaffee County Board of County Commissioners.

During his time in office, Commissioner Baker worked to improve the lives of residents in his community. He spearheaded Chaffee County Common Ground, a program dedicated to preserving agricultural land and advancing wildfire protections and helped create the Office of Housing to tackle affordable housing and sustainability challenges in the county. Commissioner Baker's dedication to Chaffee County is commendable, and his presence will be missed.

On behalf of the people of Colorado's Seventh Congressional District, it is my honor to congratulate Commissioner Keith Baker for his

service on the Chaffee County Board of County Commissioners and sincerely thank him for his contributions to the Colorado community. I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

HONORING CHIEF IAN
SCHMUTZLER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Police Chief Ian Schmutzler, a leader and public servant who has served the Vacaville community and beyond for nearly three decades. Chief Schmutzler's commitment to public safety and his efforts to strengthen community-police relations exemplify why he is deserving of recognition as he approaches his well-earned retirement.

Chief Schmutzler was born at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California, and has remained deeply connected to the region throughout his life. He earned a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from California State University Sacramento, and later completed a professional certificate in Law Enforcement Command from the University of San Diego.

Chief Schmutzler's distinguished law enforcement career began in 1997 with the Oakland Police Department, before he joined the Vacaville Police Department in 2000. Over the years, he has held numerous leadership roles, including Field Training Officer, Detective, Commander of the Field Operations and Support Bureaus, and ultimately Chief of Police. His tenure as Chief has been marked by significant accomplishments. Under his leadership, the department expanded community outreach through initiatives like the Police Activities League (PAL), which has fostered lasting relationships with younger generations. Additionally, Chief Schmutzler secured a \$4.4 million state grant to construct a Real-Time Information Center, positioning Vacaville as a leader in crime-fighting innovation.

Chief Schmutzler's commitment to service extends well beyond his professional duties. He has held leadership positions in organizations such as the Solano County Law Enforcement Administrators Association, Vacaville Police Managers Association, and Leaven Kids, and has served on the boards of the Vacaville Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club and other local organizations. Chief Schmutzler also shares his expertise as an Associate Pro-

fessor of Criminal Justice at Union Institute & University and as an instructor at Napa Valley College's Criminal Justice Training Center, ensuring that future generations of law enforcement professionals benefit from Chief Schmutzler's wisdom and experience.

Alongside his wife, April, Chief Schmutzler has raised their two sons, Jacob and Colin, in Vacaville and plans to spend his retirement in our community he has long served.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting and proper that we honor Police Chief Ian Schmutzler for his service, leadership, and dedication to the Vacaville community. We wish him a fulfilling retirement and thank him for his lifelong commitment to making our community a safer place.

RECOGNIZING THE INTRODUCTION
OF THE ORGAN DONATION RE-
FERRAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. JENNIFER L. McCLELLAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 9, 2025

Ms. McCLELLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on how we can improve and expedite the organ donation referral process.

I am proud to co-lead the bipartisan Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act with Representative WITTMAN. The critical legislation will help us understand how the broad adoption of automated electronic organ donor referrals in health systems could help more Americans receive the gift of life.

There are over 100,000 Americans in need of a lifesaving organ transplant. To reduce that number and save more lives, we must improve and modernize the organ transplant process. Modernizing the standard practice—manually notifying organ procurement of potential deceased donors—with an automatic electronic system could lift the reporting burden from busy hospital staff, reduce the risk of human error, and ensure every potential organ donor is referred. This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to study the potential for automated electronic donor referrals, reducing the barriers to successful organ transplantation and ultimately saving lives.

The Organ Donation Referral Improvement Act will support the lifesaving mission of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) located in the historic Jackson Ward in the Fourth District of Virginia. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to advance this legislation.