

HONORING THE DEDICATED LIFE
OF FORMER TENNESSEE FIRST
LADY MARTHA SUNDQUIST

(Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Martha Sundquist.

Martha passed away on March 11 of this year, and she served as First Lady of Tennessee from 1995 to 2003, alongside Governor Don Sundquist, a former Member of the House of Representatives. She used her position to bring people across Tennessee closer together.

Though she was born in Illinois, Martha planted her roots in Tennessee. She often said that she got to Tennessee as quickly as she could, and over time, she and her family lived in each of Tennessee's three grand divisions.

Martha's favorite saying was to "bloom where you are planted," and she carried that with her wherever life took her.

As the First Lady of Tennessee, Martha brought a steady, approachable presence and authority to the job. She was deeply involved in communities across the State of Tennessee. She spent time in schools with parents, teachers, and families, making sure that people felt seen, and leaving a lasting impression.

In addition, Martha Sundquist placed a strong emphasis on the next generation. She brought to Tennessee the Easter egg roll at the Governor's residence, which became one of her most meaningful traditions. It expanded to welcome underserved kindergartners for a morning of games, lunch, and visits from beloved characters that made the day truly feel special.

Care for Tennessee's natural beauty was also central to Martha's mission as the First Lady. Martha supported efforts to plant wildflowers along the State's highways and helped to promote products grown and made in the State of Tennessee. Martha's legacy in this area lives on in the State forest in Cocke County that bears her name.

Martha also understood the importance of preserving the Governor's residence and its history. Martha worked to maintain the Governor's residence, while ensuring that it remained a place where Tennesseans and visitors felt welcomed each and every day.

Even before Martha's time as First Lady, her commitment to service was clear. It was a real honor. In the late 1980s, she was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to the Board of Governors of the United Service Organizations, helping to support members of our military and their families. That role was really important to Martha.

Madam Speaker, I have to tell you that for all who knew her, throughout her life, Martha led with grace. She met people with warmth in every single interaction.

I will say that Martha, for those who knew her, was never one to seek the

spotlight. Those close to her would say that she and Governor Sundquist had an understanding that she would be the First Lady 24/7, but she would also focus on her family and her friends at the same time, and all the things that she loved, including time in her garden and on the golf course.

While I was working on these remarks, I talked to her longtime friend, Wendell Moore. Wendell served Tennessee as the principal deputy and chief of staff to Governor Sundquist.

This is what Wendell had to say about Martha Sundquist: "Martha touched countless lives in various ways, and always in a kind and thoughtful way. Her humility was ever present, as she never put herself first but, rather, served others. Her selfless concern, love, and kindness for others should be a model for all of us to follow."

Madam Speaker, Roberta and I are saddened by the loss of Martha Sundquist. I believe Martha will always be remembered not only as a strong advocate for her State and its people but also for the example that she set in public life.

Martha Sundquist was completely devoted to her husband, Don, and her entire family. Today and always, our thoughts are with her children, Andrea, Tania, and Deke.

DISASTER RELIEF FOR HAWAII

(Ms. TOKUDA of Hawaii was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. TOKUDA. Madam Speaker, last week, two back-to-back storms brought the most catastrophic flooding Hawaii has seen in over 20 years: landslides, washed-out roads, emergency evacuations, and destruction in every single county.

What we saw during these Kona lows was a hard truth: Nature will find a way, and water will go where she wants.

We grew up preparing for hurricane season. That was a threat that we knew. Now, disasters don't wait their turn. Hawaii experiences wildfires and floods year-round. What we are experiencing today is more than our infrastructure was ever built to handle.

I saw it firsthand. Roads ripped apart as water surged through storm drains too small to contain it. Four feet of rock and silt slammed against guardrails, pushed down from the mountains. Fields flattened where water jumped its bank, bypassed overgrown ditches, and raced toward the ocean.

In its path were homes, cars, farms, hospitals, schools, churches, entire communities, our "family"; "ohana."

Madam Speaker, even in our darkest hour, I also saw Hawaii at its very best: neighbors showing up for our neighbors, no one waiting to be asked; volunteers feeding families; and first responders and healthcare workers going above and beyond. That is aloha. That is who we are.

Now, we must match that same spirit with action. We need a whole-of-government approach in response right now: disaster, SNAP, and hot food waivers for families who can't access their kitchens; debris removal so that people can begin to rebuild; the Army Corps of Engineers clearing and dredging our waterways; EPA testing soil and water to keep our communities safe from whatever ran off the farms or the mountainsides behind them; and National Health Corps support for wound care, mental health, and recovery that doesn't end when the water recedes.

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To every "family," "ohana," to every friend, and member of our community back home in Hawaii clearing out the mud, mourning what was lost, searching for some stable ground again, you are not alone. We see you. We will always be standing with you. We will not stop fighting to bring every possible resource to help our communities recover, rebuild, and come back even stronger.

HONORING THE 160TH SPECIAL
OPERATIONS AVIATION REGIMENT

(Mr. VAN EPPS of Tennessee was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. VAN EPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today with deep humility and profound gratitude to honor one of the most elite and storied units in our Armed Forces, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the Night Stalkers.

I have the privilege of speaking not only as a Member of this body, but as someone who wore that patch, who flew alongside these extraordinary men and women, and who witnessed firsthand their quiet professionalism, their relentless discipline, and their unwavering commitment to mission and country.

I am proud to stand here as only the second former Night Stalker to serve in Congress and the first who flew as a 160th helicopter pilot.

The Night Stalkers were born out of failure and forged into excellence. In 1980, after the tragic events of Operation Eagle Claw in Iran, our Nation recognized a critical gap. We needed a unit capable of executing the most complex, high-risk missions in the most demanding environments on Earth, at night, and under any conditions.

From that necessity, the 160th was created. What began as a response to failure has become one of the most capable and respected special operations aviation units in the world. Their motto is simple: "Night Stalkers don't quit," and they don't.

For decades—through Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan, and countless missions that will never publicly be known—the Night Stalkers have been there: flying low, flying fast, and flying

into the most dangerous places on Earth so that others may succeed.

They are pilots, crew chiefs, and maintainers who deliver our Nation's most elite special operations forces to the fight and bring them home. Often, they do it in silence, without recognition, without headlines, and without fanfare. But make no mistake: the success of countless missions and the safety of countless Americans rests on their shoulders.

Madam Speaker, my journey to the 160th began at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where I learned what it meant to lead and to serve. I went on to fly Apache attack helicopters on my first combat deployment to Iraq, but it was my selection into the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell that defined the most challenging and most meaningful chapter of my military career.

At Fort Campbell, I had the honor of serving alongside the very best. The standard is unforgiving. The training is relentless, and the expectation is clear: Mission first, people always.

It was there that I learned what true excellence looks like, not in theory, but in practice. It was there that I saw the character of the American warfighter at its finest.

Madam Speaker, we cannot talk about the 160th without recognizing the community that supports it. Clarksville, Montgomery County, and the surrounding region are more than just locations on a map. They are a critical part of the mission. They are home to thousands of servicemembers and their families. They are communities that understand sacrifice, communities that show up, and communities that support those who serve, not just in words, but in action.

Fort Campbell and the Clarksville community represent one of the strongest military civilian partnerships in our Nation, and we are stronger because of it.

Madam Speaker, the Night Stalkers are defined by their ethos: "Night Stalkers don't quit." But that ethos is more than a slogan. It is a promise—a promise to the elite special operators they carry, a promise to the missions they execute, and a promise to the Nation they serve.

It means flying into danger when others cannot. It means pressing forward when conditions say turn back, and it means doing the hard things over and over again without recognition, without hesitation, and without failure.

Today, I ask this body to join me in honoring the men and women of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, past and present.

To the Night Stalkers still serving, we see you, we respect you, and we are grateful for you.

To the families who stand behind them, your strength makes their service possible.

To those who gave their lives in service to this unit and this Nation, we will never forget your sacrifice.

Madam Speaker, it was the honor of a lifetime to serve among the Night Stalkers, and it is my honor today to stand on this floor and say on behalf of a grateful Nation: Night Stalkers don't quit, and neither will we.

RECOGNIZING SALLY ANDERSON

(Mr. NEGUSE of Colorado was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. NEGUSE. Madam Speaker, before I was first sworn in to the United States Congress, my predecessor gave me a great piece of advice. He told me that the most important thing to do as I was getting started was to build a great team.

I am glad I took his advice. The first person that I hired when I became a Member of Congress, to help build the team and to ultimately help lead it, was Sally Anderson.

I rise today 7½ years later to thank her for her selfless, tireless, and dedicated service—her service to the people of Colorado's Second District, her service to the people of Colorado, and her service to our country.

Sally first served as my district director and later became my Colorado chief of staff. Throughout her tenure, she worked incredibly hard each and every day to serve the citizens of our district. One can imagine the various challenges that our communities face from year to year. She faced each of those challenges with empathy, with compassion, and with unwavering determination. Historic wildfires, terrible flash floods, a devastating mass shooting, emergency after emergency, crisis after crisis, Sally was often the first call that I would make when grappling with how to solve a challenge, address an emergency in my district, and to do the work that we are solemnly charged with doing. She joined me at funerals, memorials, and remembrances. She played a pivotal role in the development of legislation here in Washington, D.C.

I could spend hours, Madam Speaker, regaling you with the stories of the constituents' lives that she shaped, the casework that she supervised, and the countless examples of her kindness, leaving an indelible impression in the hearts and minds of the people I represent from Boulder to Fort Collins, from Vail to Steamboat Springs, and every corner in between.

Sally was also a leader here in Washington. She was a mentor to district directors across the country as part of our district directors' service program. I have heard countless stories from my colleagues who have told me from their district directors of their experience, when they have relied on her counsel and advice when faced with a challenge or crisis.

Perhaps most importantly, above all else, her professionalism and the ways in which she approached her job—selfless, thankless, and always available to help a constituent in need—in my view,

it helped restore some trust in our government, which is so desperately needed now more than ever.

Put simply, the Second District and our office will miss her. I wish her well and am so excited for her next chapter. On behalf of the people of the Second District, I thank Sally for her service.

NEXSTAR ACQUISITION OF TEGNA

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, last night, in the dead of night, the FCC and the Department of Justice did something unprecedented. They approved a merger that would create the Nation's largest local television station operator.

Nexstar Media Group's \$6.2 billion acquisition of Tegna would make it the largest local television station owner in the United States: 265 stations across 44 States, reaching 80 percent of American households. Why did they approve it? Simple reason: Because Donald Trump wanted them to.

The deal is outrageous. It is devastating for local news, devastating for consumers, devastating for freedom of the press, but perhaps most problematic of all, Mr. Speaker, it is unlawful. The merger and the decision to approve it violates the law.

By the way, this isn't complicated. It is simple. In 2004, Congress created a very specific 39 percent national audience limitation. That is in the law. It is not ambiguous. It is not nebulous. It is clear-cut, and this merger violates it.

Let me read, Mr. Speaker, the dissent from one of the FCC commissioners. I hope every Member of this body reads it in full. "The order is wrong on the law, wrong on the policy, and the process by which it was issued is indefensible.

"The Commission does not have the authority to raise or waive the 39 percent national audience reach limitation. Simply put: The national audience reach limitation is a statutory requirement, and only Congress has the authority to raise it."

It is clear-cut, simple. We cannot allow this debasement of the FCC's processes to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I have a solution: Let's rein in this lawless agency through the appropriations process. That is exactly what I intend to propose. I hope my colleagues will join me.

HONORING DR. LAWRENCE GELMAN

(Ms. DE LA CRUZ of Texas was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Lawrence Gelman.

For nearly 40 years, he served as a pillar of our South Texas community. A brilliant physician and visionary leader, he founded DHR Health, pioneering the physician-owned model in the Rio Grande Valley and championing the idea that doctors were the best qualified to run hospitals. Today,