

his injuries and continued to serve with profound distinction and success. He eventually joined the Special Forces and in 1961 became one of the very first 100 Green Berets. He used his success and his knowledge of the Special Forces to great effect as an instructor for many years; and although he was seen as a natural leader, Ed was careful to remain humble while being awarded numerous medals, badges, and commendations. Following his distinguished service, he devoted himself to his wife, children, and extended family. He loved having the freedom to fish with his grandchildren and skydive recreationally periodically, but these were not the only freedoms that stirred Ed's passion.

Too often these days, Congress is overly partisan and forgets our need to focus on issues of importance and getting things done and on service. And now, more than ever, when we are facing as a country great significant issues of national importance, we should absolutely remember the leadership of people Ed Clough and his devotion, when he proudly stated, "I may not agree with every American's opinion, but I spent my life protecting the freedom they have to express it."

And now, Madam Speaker, as we approach the Fourth of July holiday and we consider our independence as a Nation and a country, we must pay tribute to citizens like Ed, who have devoted their lives to protecting our sovereignty. We are a Nation of free citizens who may speak honestly and display our beliefs proudly. But without the men and women who bravely serve in our military—men and women like Master Sergeant Clough—none of our cherished freedoms would exist today.

Master Sergeant Clough, I honor you and I thank you for your service. I also thank the family that supported you and loved you throughout your distinguished career. My hope is that today and each day in the future we will be conscious of the dedication and service of the men and women in our Armed Forces. We must always acknowledge the importance of remaining resilient and brave in the face of great challenges, just as Master Sergeant Clough did throughout his entire life.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 201(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6431), and the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following members on the part of the House to the Commission on International Religious Freedom:

Ms. Elizabeth W. Prodromou, Boston, Massachusetts, for a 2-year term ending May 14, 2012, to succeed herself And upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader:

Mr. Ted Ven Der Meid, Rochester, New York, for a 2-year term ending May 14, 2012, to succeed Ms. Nina Shea

□ 1740

HONORING RON GETTELFINGER FOR HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE UAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of my colleagues that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend to many of us and a man that many of us here admire greatly on his retirement as UAW President. I refer to Ron Gettelfinger, a great citizen, a great patriot, a great leader of labor, and a wonderful human being. Ron Gettelfinger did not want to have any recognition of his labors on behalf of working men and women and on behalf of the people at this particular time. But I think he will forgive us if we go on to say a few of the things about the respect in which he is held and why that be so.

For the last 8 years, Ron Gettelfinger has led the UAW as their president, and he has done so both loyally and ably through some of the most difficult economic times facing our Nation or facing the union. Through his hard work and dedication to his brothers and sisters of the UAW, we have witnessed the auto industry to right itself and to begin to come out of some of the worst times which it has confronted in its history. It is interesting to note that as the head of one of the most democratic unions in the world, Ron Gettelfinger was able to lead the union in a way which saved the industry and which enabled the industry to have negotiations about give-backs and other things always difficult to sell to the rank and file.

Elected in 2002 as international president of the UAW, Ron Gettelfinger rose through the ranks, beginning his career first as a member of UAW Local 862 in 1964. He worked in Ford's Louisville assembly plant as a chassis line repairman while he attended Indiana University Southeast at night, and it is the workers there who first recognized Ron's extraordinary qualities and elected him to represent them. He then went on to serve as Region 3 UAW director and UAW vice president.

Throughout his time in these roles, he fought relentlessly and tirelessly to

ensure workers had the quality of life they deserve by making health care accessible and affordable to all, ensuring new jobs in industry through the manufacturing of advanced technology vehicles, and addressing workers' rights provisions in fair trade agreements. He gave extraordinary leadership not just to the union and the industry but to the country.

As we have all known, Ron does not back down from a challenge. During the most difficult times in the auto industry, he worked together with business in a very close fashion to assure the survival of the industry and the companies which the UAW had negotiated agreements with. He negotiated a new round of contracts with The Big Three, creating voluntary beneficiary associations to provide health care to retirees in the Big Three and to save huge amounts of money to the auto companies. He was one of the leadership in not only determining that government assistance would be needed but in seeing to it that the union's voice was heard and that the saving of the auto industry was participated in very actively by the UAW and by the members that he served. He once said of himself, We did what we had to do to save the industry. And now, less than a year later, the auto industry is once again profitable and expanding production. In fact, Chrysler is hiring again for the first time in 10 years.

Fortunately, cars from the Big Three, when the companies and the unions and their members work together, are safe and reliable, and this year have earned the highest quality ratings in J.D. Power and Associates' annual Initial Quality Study, beating import brands by satisfying margins. It is the workers and the members and the leaders of the UAW who have worked so hard to ensure that through times of turmoil, our domestic auto industry continues to produce the best and the safest vehicles while increasing in extraordinary ways the productivity of the workplace.

And at a time when union membership is at its lowest in years, it has fought relentlessly to ensure that workers who want to organize can do so. Together with his other colleagues in labor, he has advocated for the Employee Free Choice Act, for legislation which will allow workers to decide if they want to use a majority sign-up to form a union, protecting them from employer coercion. But he has gone well beyond the needs and the concerns of labor. He has worked for education, for health care, for a clean and wholesome environment, for the health of our young and old, and for the protection of the rights of Americans.

Now, like Ron, I think our country agrees that these things are necessary and helpful; but he understands, as do many of his admirers, that labor's responsibilities and duties go far beyond the simple concerns of labor, and go to seeing to it that this country is the best that we, working together, can make it be.