

Afghanistan in which he flew over 2,000 hours in Harrier aircraft.

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A southwestern Pennsylvanian at heart, it should come as no surprise that Otis was known, while seated in the cockpit, to listen to the Steelers while flying in the skies over Iraq. But more than anything, Lieutenant Colonel Raible was a father, a husband, and a son; a proud dad of three children, ages 11, 9, and 2. Otis so loved and was loved by his family.

As his mother Belvina of North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, said, her son died defending all that he held dear. "He was the best of the best," she said. Indeed, Mrs. Raible, he was.

Today, we as a Nation say "thank you" to Lieutenant Colonel Raible and to his entire family. We're so grateful for your service and for your sacrifice protecting our freedom. Through your service, you have made your family and your Nation better. Through your sacrifice, you have made America stronger. Through your courage, you have made America proud.

Many times, I'm sure you soared above the clouds where you could touch the face of God. Now you rest in his loving arms for eternity. Thank you, Colonel. Our Nation thanks you, as well.

#### THE PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS PLEBISCITE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. On November 6, the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico will hold a plebiscite on the island's political future. Voters will be asked if they want to continue the current status or to seek a new status. Voters will also be asked to express their preference among the three alternatives to the current status recognized as legally and politically viable by the Federal Government and international law: independence, nationhood in free association with the United States, and statehood.

This plebiscite is different from previous plebiscites in Puerto Rico. It will be the first time that island residents have an opportunity to answer "yes" or "no" to the question of whether they support the status that Puerto Rico has had since 1898. This question has inherent value in a democracy where a government's legitimacy is based on the consent of the governed. And this plebiscite will only include those status options identified as valid by Congress and the White House. True self-determination is a choice among options that can be implemented, not an exercise in wishful thinking.

If a majority of voters express satisfaction with the current status, Puerto Rico's status would not change at this time. Likewise, if there is majority support to change the current status

but not majority support for one of the three alternatives, Puerto Rico's current status would also continue. However, if the majority votes against the status quo and in favor of statehood, free association, or independence, Congress and the President should take action that honors that choice.

Top Democratic and Republican leaders have indicated they will take the results of this plebiscite seriously. That is as it should be. The United States is the greatest democracy in history and a champion of peaceful self-determination around the world. Consistent with this principle, I am confident that Federal officials will respect the choice made by their Federal citizens from Puerto Rico if they express a clear desire to change the island status.

Now I want to speak directly to the men and women I represent in Congress. This plebiscite will have a real impact on you, your family, and the future of the island we love. It is important that you make your voice heard and your vote count.

It is well-known that I oppose the current status and advocate for statehood for Puerto Rico. Whether it is called "territory," "commonwealth," or "colony," the current status denies us the most fundamental rights in a democracy: the right to choose the leaders who make our national laws, and the right to equal treatment under those laws. In my view, the current status is an affront to our dignity.

In my office hangs a framed photo of servicemembers from the island who have lost their lives since 2001. They're the latest in a long line of Puerto Rican patriots who have fought and fallen for this Nation. This photo inspires me, but it also makes me sad. I cannot understand how we, such a proud people, can voluntarily submit to a status that makes us second-class citizens in the country that we have defended for generations.

I realize that after nearly 115 years, the prospect of change can be unsettling, but I also know that there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. We deserve better than what we have, and the time has come for us to seek a new status that will empower us to realize our full potential.

Among the alternatives to the current status, I believe statehood is the right choice. Independence and free association are worthy options, but both would place at risk our U.S. citizenship and Federal support under programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security for future generations of Puerto Ricans. Because I believe the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans are opposed to breaking or substantially weakening the strong political, social, and economic bonds that have formed between Puerto Rico and the United States, I think the only viable alternative to the status quo is statehood. At this critical moment in history, we should aspire to perfect our union, not to sever it.

The current status is about second-class citizenship, which we should rise up to reject. Independence and free association are about separation, which would diminish the opportunities available to our children and grandchildren. Statehood is about equal treatment. It would deliver to Puerto Rico what all free people deserve: full voting rights, full self-government, and full equality under the law.

This November, I hope that the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico will send a clear message to Congress that they're ready to make a change.

#### IN HONOR OF OFFICER BRADLEY FOX

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to honor the life and memory of Pennsylvania Police Officer Bradley Fox.

Brad Fox was a 5-year veteran of the Plymouth Township Police Department in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Having grown up in my home of Bucks County, Officer Fox graduated from William Tennent High School and went on to serve his country for 10 years in the United States Marine Corps.

A well-decorated soldier, Officer Fox received, among other accolades, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Upon returning from his military service, Officer Fox joined his local police force in Montgomery County, where he built a life for himself, his wife, Lynsay, their daughter, and a second child who is on the way.

On the night of Thursday, September 13, the family, friends, and fellow officers of Brad Fox received the phone call they hoped would never come. Officer Fox was responding to a report of a hit-and-run in his suburban Philadelphia township. As he was investigating the incident, both Officer Fox and his canine companion were ambushed by the suspect and attacked, which left Officer Fox fatally wounded.

Yesterday afternoon, I attended the burial services for Officer Fox at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery in Bucks County. The show of support from the local law enforcement community and the people of southeastern Pennsylvania as a whole was inspiring and it was heartfelt.

To see that in such a short lifetime this father, husband, brother, son, veteran, and police officer had touched so many lives was a testament to the kind of person that Brad Fox was. He dedicated his entire life to service to his community and to his country and should serve as an example to every one of us.

Every day in Montgomery County and in Bucks County and in communities across this great Nation, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and