

single-employer program, with the exception that preretirement survivor annuities are forfeitable in multiemployer plans if the participant has not died as of the termination date.

The debate over how to best provide income security for older Americans will continue for some time. However, in the meantime, it is unconscionable that a widow or widower would be denied the modest benefits provided under the PBGC multiemployer plan simply because his or her spouse did not die before the plan was turned over to the PBGC.

This discrepancy appears inadvertent and deserves to be corrected by Congress. I ask my colleagues for their support of this legislation so we can address this issue quickly.

HONORING KRISTINA “KRISTY”
MARIE SERMERSHEIM

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and honor Kristina “Kristy” Marie Sermersheim. I first met Kristy more than 30 years ago. I was a brash candidate for office not backed by the establishment and not expected to win. Kristy was a union activist who didn’t know the meaning of the word “no”. Together we challenged the conventional wisdom. Voters decided that an emphasis on children and families was what they cared about. I was elected to the Board of Supervisors of Santa Clara County. That same year, in 1981, she became a full-time Service Employees International Union (SEIU) staff member.

The financial roof fell in on the county shortly thereafter, the impact of Proposition 13. Neither of us wanted a reduction in services to people in need. But we faced the imperative of reductions.

We worked together to cut the budget, to make sure that as we dealt with the budget reality we protected the most vulnerable and never scapegoated our employees. Kristy Sermersheim proved her bona fides in those tough times. She was smart, pragmatic but idealistic. She had values. She stood up for her members and she stood up for those in need. She was a star.

She continued to represent workers for another 32 years. As a passionate advocate for workers’ rights, she held a range of positions on various local, state, national, and international organizations, including SEIU Local 715, SEIU International Union, South Bay American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO) Labor Council, California Labor Federation, SEIU Public Services Division, and SEIU California State Council. Kristy assumed the leadership role of SEIU local 715, the largest union representing employees of Santa Clara County.

Born in New Albany, Indiana, during elementary school, her family lived in Michigan, San Diego, and Long Beach, California. In 1961, her family moved to San Jose. In 1967, she graduated from Leigh High School. Kristy’s good grades earned accolades as a National Merit Scholar Finalist and she was voted “Most Likely to Succeed” by her classmates. After she graduated, she took classes at San Jose State University and began work-

ing as a Santa Clara County Social Services Eligibility Worker in the Welfare Department.

Kristy has devoted her life to social justice and workers’ rights. She served 11 years as a member leader for the Santa Clara County Employees Association.

As head of the former SEIU Local 715 in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, Kristy expanded the union from 5,000 members working for four employers to more than 30,000 members with over 20 different contracts. She led the consolidation of five unions, including Local 715, to form the new SEIU Local 521. As Chief Elected Office of SEIU 521, she fought on behalf of 57,000 workers throughout North and Central California. Under her leadership, the County of Santa Clara and SEIU negotiated an \$80 million settlement that established pay equity by removing discrimination in wage-setting for women and people of color.

We worked together for rights for women. Kristy helped make sure that the union represented a female worker in the county roads department in an affirmative action case that went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. County government was her partner in the case. I remember so well listening to the oral arguments on that case as a young County Supervisor. We were proud that local government and the union were partners in the quest for equal rights for women.

The case confirmed that government agencies must consider previous discrimination history as well as qualifications when making hiring decisions. In recognition of over 40 years of contributions to the social and political advancement of women, Kristy was awarded the South Bay AFL–CIO Labor Council’s 2012 COPE Award for Service Above Self.

Throughout her career, Kristy worked together with public workers to obtain improvements in working conditions, wages, and benefits. She forged alliances with other unions and community groups to improve public services to the residents union members serve. Kristy is now retired and lives in Morgan Hill with her two sisters, Andrea and Teresa. The three sisters have collectively raised their brother’s children after he passed away. They live with their niece Flori, a little dog, and three cats. In her retirement, Kristy wants to help the developmentally disabled community and volunteer where she can make a difference. I join in honoring her decades of contribution and service to the betterment of our society. The community is very fortunate to have benefited from her advocacy, dedication, and leadership. She has left her mark in the community and I know she will continue to play a positive role.

COMMEMORATING THE 21ST ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE KHOJALY
MASSACRE

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly massacre perpetrated by Armenian armed forces on February 25–26, 1992 in the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Khojaly, now under the oc-

cupation of Armenian armed forces, was the site of the largest killing of ethnic Azerbaijani civilians in the course of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict.

Khojaly, once the home to 7,000 people, was completely destroyed. Six hundred thirteen people were killed, of which 106 were women, 83 were children and 56 were purported to have been killed with extreme cruelty and torture. In addition, 1,275 people were taken hostage, 150 went missing and 487 people became disabled. Also in the records maintained, 76 of the victims were teenagers, 8 families were wiped out and 25 children lost both of their parents while 130 lost one of their parents. According to Human Rights Watch and other international observers, the Armenian Armed forces were reportedly aided by the Russian 366th Motor Rifle Regiment.

At the time, Newsweek magazine reported: “Azerbaijan was a charnel house again last week: a place of mourning refugees and dozens of mangled corpses dragged to a makeshift morgue behind the mosque. They were ordinary Azerbaijani men, women and children of Khojaly, a small village in war-torn Nagorno-Karabakh overrun by Armenian forces on 25–26 February. Many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped.”

As part of the Khojaly population that tried to escape, they encountered violent ambushes that led to abuses, torture, mutilation and death. The Russian organization, Memorial, stated that 200 Azerbaijani corpses were brought from Khojaly to Agdam within four days.

Time magazine published the following description: “While the details are argued, this much is plain: something grim and unconscionable happened in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly 2 weeks ago. So far, some 200 dead Azerbaijanis, many of them mutilated, have been transported out of the town tucked inside the Armenian-dominated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh for burial in neighboring Azerbaijan. The total number of deaths—the Azerbaijanis claim 1,324 civilians have been slaughtered, most of them women and children—is unknown.”

The extent of the cruelty of this massacre against women, children and the elderly was unfathomable. This anniversary reminds us of the need to redouble efforts to help resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The United States as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group should intensify its efforts to reach a resolution of this protracted conflict.

Mr. Speaker, Azerbaijan is a strong ally of the United States in a strategically important and complex region of the world. I ask my colleagues to join me and our Azerbaijani friends in commemorating the tragedy that occurred in the town of Khojaly.

TERRITORIAL SEA

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO
SABLAN**

OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that will return to the people of the Northern Marianas ownership of the three