

John Berry will be greatly missed by all who serve our country in its civilian workforce, and I wish John and his partner, Curtis, all the best as he begins the next phase in his career.

I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking John for his service, for his leadership, for his insights, for his inspiration, and for being an example to all of us of a positive, constructive, supportive, and successful career in Federal service.

Mr. Speaker, our country has been the beneficiary of his character, integrity, and extraordinary ability. We wish him well in all that he will be doing. I'm sure it will be extraordinarily productive and of service to our country as he moves on from Federal service at the OPM to a new challenge and a new career.

THE VETERANS TIMELY ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. ROSS. Yesterday, I had the distinguished opportunity to greet three busloads of Florida World War II veterans participating in an Honor Flight.

In total, more than 80 proud Floridians who bravely fought to free the world of evil during World War II had the wonderful opportunity to visit and reflect at their memorial. As the son of a World War II veteran, I was blessed to have the opportunity to join my father as he participated in a previous Honor Flight just 2 years ago. Although he has since passed on, I know he truly cherished this great experience.

American veterans are the backbone of the freedom and prosperity this country has enjoyed for over 200 years. Without their service, we would not be the Nation we are today. We would not enjoy the privileges of this democracy—the greatest experiment in government known to mankind. Unfortunately, veterans across the country continue to encounter unacceptable problems and delays in receiving appointments from the Veterans Administration for essential medical and special health care needs.

That is why I am proud to introduce H.R. 241, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act.

This legislation, supported by the Military Officers Association of America, will ensure that veterans seeking medical care from the VA facility receive an appointment within 30 days. Moving forward, this legislation will go a long way in ensuring veterans' critical medical needs no longer slip through the cracks of the system.

As I continue to reflect on the proud history and service of the many World War II veterans like my good friend Charlie Clark, with whom I visited yesterday and whom I had the pleasure of knowing for several years as a member of the local YMCA, I will also look forward to ensuring that our youngest

generation of veterans receives the support and timely access to health care that they have so honorably earned.

□ 1010

END-OF-LIFE CARE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Monday in the blink of an eye, hundreds of people at the Boston Marathon were faced with an awful decision. None of them woke up that morning expecting they, or a loved one, was going to need emergency care in a life-threatening situation. We tend to think of end-of-life care as the province of a terminally ill person, often elderly, but that's just one circumstance, and not necessarily the most common.

The decisions need to be made instantly about whether to amputate a limb, and a decision must be made that moment. If a person is in shock or unconscious, who helps make that decision for them?

Last week, I had two more circumstances where people in my life were faced with totally unexpected life-threatening circumstances that brought these questions into sharp perspective. Anybody, anywhere, any time. How do we make sure that these decisions, which are made every day in every State in virtually every city, are made in accordance with the best interest and wishes of the patient and the patient's family?

I've been working for the last 5 years for the Federal Government to be a better partner with families. It's called end-of-life care, and the Federal Government, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Congress are missing in action. Medicare will spend billions of dollars on the most expensive, invasive, painful, and in some cases, if not unnecessary, at least questionable care, often regardless of the wishes of the patient and their family. Yet Medicare won't pay \$100 or \$200 for that medical professional to have a conversation with the patient and their family.

It's time for us to step up. We need to make sure that we clear up the questions in everyone's minds about the choices, the consequences, what the patient and the family want, and most critically, make sure those wishes are honored. Like my friend, whose heart stopped this weekend, totally unexpectedly, we don't know when or where a loved one will be in this position. But there's no excuse we don't do everything we can to help families and encourage everyone that is close to us, that works with us, to take their own steps to identify who speaks for them when they can't, and what they want to happen.

This is personal for me. I had these jarring reminders that one of the

greatest gifts each of us can give our families is to have a thoughtful and frank discussion about what our wishes would be for medical care if we're unable to suddenly make those decisions. It's also one of the greatest gifts that this Congress can make to the people we represent by doing our job so that the Federal Government is a better partner in making sure those conversations are possible.

Please cosponsor our bipartisan Personalize Your Care Act, H.R. 1173, and then sit down and have this conversation with your family. It's not always the easiest, but it is far better than making your loved ones guess and feel guilty.

PATH TO STATEHOOD

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

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, in November 2012, Puerto Rico held a referendum on its political status. The results demonstrated that a clear majority of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico want to end the island's current territory status, that a supermajority prefers statehood among the possible alternatives, and that—for the first time in history—more voters favor statehood than the current status.

As I have remarked before, not a single one of my stateside colleagues in Congress would accept territory status for their own constituents. So they must recognize and respect that the American citizens of Puerto Rico no longer accept it either. I also trust that my colleagues who represent States will credit my constituents for aspiring to have the same rights and responsibilities as their constituents.

Last week, the President took an important step. As part of the proposed budget the administration submitted to Congress, the Justice Department is seeking \$2.5 million to conduct the first Federally sponsored vote on Puerto Rico's political status in the 115 years that the territory has been under the U.S. flag. The funding would be granted to Puerto Rico's Elections Commission to conduct objective voter education and a vote on "options that would resolve Puerto Rico's future political status."

Key congressional leaders in the House and the Senate, Republican and Democrat alike, have already issued statements of support for the President's action, calling it an appropriate response to the local referendum.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents may not have a vote in the government that makes their national laws, but they do have a voice—and they made that voice heard loud and clear in November. A budget reflects one's priorities and values. I support the President's budget because it shows respect for the democratically expressed aspirations of the U.S. citizens who reside in Puerto Rico. And it demonstrates a clear desire to

move forward on this complex but critical issue.

As the budget request states, the Federally sponsored vote is to be among options that would resolve Puerto Rico's political status. The only way to resolve the island's status is through statehood or national sovereignty. Puerto Rico cannot resolve its status by maintaining the same undemocratic status that my people have endured since 1898 and that they soundly rejected in November. The current status is the root cause of Puerto Rico's political, economic, and social problems, so it cannot also be the solution to those problems.

In addition, the budget language clearly states that the Department of Justice shall not provide funding until it certifies that the ballot and voter education materials are consistent with the Constitution, basic laws, and policies of the United States. The purpose of this language is to ensure that the ballot does not include impossible status proposals that have been repeatedly declared unworkable as a matter of both law and policy by the Federal Government. I am pleased that the administration understands that true self-determination is a choice among options that can be implemented, not an exercise in wishful thinking.

The President's request represents one path forward, but it is important to underscore that it is not the only path forward. In the coming weeks, I will introduce stand-alone legislation on the status issue that will both complement President Obama's request and reflect the undisputable fact that statehood won the November referendum.

Puerto Rico stands in a far different place today than it did six months ago. A historic referendum was held, the President responded to the results, and Congress now has a responsibility to act. Those who seek democracy, equality, and progress for Puerto Rico are on the forward march, while those who support the failed status quo are in retreat. We drive the debate, while they merely react to the debate. And, in the end, mindful that the arc of history is long but that it bends towards justice, I am confident we will prevail.

HONORING MAUELLE SHIREK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, let me first send my thoughts and prayers to the city of Boston, the families and friends of all of those touched by Monday's horrific tragedy. Incredible strength was in full display in the streets of Boston when untold numbers of people—the police, firefighters, volunteers, runners, and bystanders—ran towards the explosions to try to help in any way they could without regard for their own safety.

As we learn the details of this attack, let us remember that what makes

us strong as a Nation is the tremendous care we have for our fellow Americans, especially during the hardest times. This is a lesson that I learned deeply from my friend and mentor, Maudelle Shirek. Maudelle died last week at the age of 101. She would have been 102 June 18. My heart and my prayers go out to her friends and family.

□ 1020

Maudelle was truly the "godmother of East Bay progressive politics." The former city of Berkeley vice mayor and eight-term council member was born and raised in Jefferson, Arkansas. As the granddaughter of slaves, she was passionate about justice and civil rights.

After moving to Berkeley in the 1940s, she became active in the antiwar movement, fought on behalf of unions, advocated for HIV and AIDS awareness, care, and treatment, and helped organize the Free Mandela Movement. She was also the first elected official in the United States to advocate for needle exchange programs.

During her tenure as a Berkeley elected official, she was instrumental in creating multiple city commissions, including the Berkeley Commission on Labor. When she retired, mind you, at 92 years of age, she was the oldest elected official in California at that time. In 2007, the Berkeley City Council renamed city hall in her honor.

She not only urged me to get involved in politics, but also inspired my predecessor, Congressman Ron Dellums, to run for Congress. Her understanding of the importance of investing in people won the solid support of voters in her district and across the country.

I met Maudelle in the early seventies while I was a student at Mills College. She widened my perspective on global politics during our travels around the world. She reinforced the idea that we are all part of a global family and what happens here in the United States affects our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world and vice versa. Maudelle was a personal friend, mentor, and confidante.

Maudelle actually was a health aficionado. She was committed to educating seniors and the entire community on the benefits of healthy living. She loved shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables, and you would often find her cooking nutritious meals at the West Berkeley Senior Center.

We loved to walk Lake Merritt and the Berkeley Marina together, where she talked to me about acupuncture and natural remedies like cayenne pepper and warm water for colds and the importance of exercise.

Maudelle was a woman of great faith. During the seventies, we enjoyed attending the Church for Tomorrow, which formerly was the Church for Today. We went there together, and this is where I realized that her passion for service and justice was driven by

her commitment to what she called doing the Lord's work on this Earth.

She was a woman who understood that she had to have a comprehensive agenda. It just couldn't be a single issue like health care or seniors or peace and justice, but it had to be about being committed to comprehensive and positive changes that seek to improve the lives of all Americans.

Maudelle worked at the Berkeley Co-Op Credit Union. She engaged all of us, in the seventies, mind you, in financial literacy, and urged me, as a young single student to buy a house because she reminded me over and over again that one's equity in one's home was the primary path to the middle class, and that that was the main way that I could get the resources to take care of my kids and send them to school, a lesson we should teach our own children today.

Several years ago, I tried to name the Berkeley Post Office after Maudelle. While this body has a tradition of supporting post office bills in a bipartisan way, Congressman STEVE KING from Iowa came to this floor and tried to tarnish her character. He brought groundless accusations, and this body voted against—mind you, against—naming the post office in my district after this great icon. I hope one day, in her memory, Representative KING will apologize to Maudelle and her family and the city of Berkeley for such an unfair and unwarranted attack. She was deeply hurt by it, but kept her head high and lived to see the Berkeley City Hall named after her.

Maudelle refused to accept arbitrary limitations. That's one of the best things we all respected about her. Maudelle is one of the best examples of how one person can make a difference. She was a fearless and inspirational woman who tirelessly fought to make this world a fair and just place. She spoke for the voiceless and was such a staunch defender of our basic civil rights.

I believe, like many, that Maudelle's legacy of over 70 years of service to Berkeley, the East Bay, the Nation, and the world will inspire many to speak for the voiceless and to stand up for justice, both here in America and around the globe. I will deeply miss her wise counsel, love, and support.

LET'S DO OUR PATRIOTIC DUTY AND VOTE ON GUN CONTROL

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, our hearts as well go out to the victims and the families of those who were killed and seriously wounded in Boston on Patriots' Day.

This has been a very difficult time for our country. At that event in Boston were families from Newtown, Connecticut, invited to celebrate Patriots' Day in Boston. The Red Sox play in the