

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FOCUSING ON WORKING FAMILIES

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, thank you, Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, for your tireless advocacy for working families. I'd also like to thank Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT for leading the way, as ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee, and with this important agenda.

Let me start by telling Andre's story.

Andre is from California, he's 31 and a father of four boys. He was a trained apprenticed carpenter.

When he began to look for work, he learned quickly that without a personal connection, it was nearly impossible to get a job in the construction industry. Every morning, he hustled to get to work sites by 5 AM to introduce himself to employers and show them his skills.

Seldom did he receive the opportunity to actually apply for a job.

As a result, he could barely sustain his family. Any income he had went to food, transportation and rent. So, he began volunteering with the Los Angeles Black Workers Center, which connected him to a good-paying job building new rail lines that let him provide for his family.

The unemployment and underemployment that Andre and other Black workers experience is not unique. The use of informal networks in hiring means that Black workers are often excluded and discriminated against before they even get a shot. Andre said: "Too many people are out there talking about training, like we're not trained enough. Training is not the issue. I was trained really well. The issue is access."

Andre is right—all the training in the world won't help if in the end, employers won't give people like Andre a fair shot.

And this agenda is designed to give Andre, his family and all families, a fair chance.

Andre's struggle reflects the divide in our economy and our country: while some have recovered fully from the Great Recession, too many working families are still struggling.

And in communities of color, which were the hardest hit by the Great Recession, unemployment and underemployment remains sky-high—and wage discrimination and formal and informal barriers to employment continue to slow economic growth.

For example, African American women in my home state of California still earn just 64 cents for every dollar paid to white men. And Latinas earn a mere 44 cents. This persistent wage gap is a reflection of our economy, which is leaving too many working families behind—especially communities of color.

That's why the Working Family Agenda is so important.

It takes long overdue steps to level the playing field for all.

Specifically, this agenda would: raise the wage for millions, strengthen collective bargaining and improve working conditions, provide paid sick and family leave, and expand access to childcare.

Furthermore, it would provide long overdue protections for women and LGBT Americans in the workplace.

And as a former small business owner, I know the importance and value of providing your employees with a living wage: it's better for your company and for retaining good workers.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to take action on this agenda—families need it and our economy needs it. Let's boost wages, make it easier for families to balance work and family life, and bring an end to workplace discrimination.

That's what American families want—and it's what Congress should be working on.

RECOGNIZING JERRY DAVIS AS THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize Mr. Jerry Davis from Florida's First Congressional District, for being selected as the Northwest Florida Agricultural Innovator of the Year.

Jerry's love of farming derives from his childhood, when he helped grow soybeans and wheat on his family's farm. Since the beginning, Jerry has been an innovator in the agricultural arena. By the time he was 20, he designed a seed conditioning plant to clean and bag seed for planting. In 1987, he became involved in the testing of a crop simulation model developed by scientists in USDA's Agricultural Research Services and Mississippi State and Clemson Universities. The model allowed participants to optimize inputs in relation to weather, nitrogen, moisture stress, crop maturity, growth resultants, and harvest aid materials. As a result of this innovative project, Jerry and the other participating growers saw net profits on test fields increase by more than \$30 per acre.

In the late 1990s, Jerry began expanding his farming operation from Santa Rosa County to Escambia County in Florida and Baldwin and Hale counties in Alabama. At the time, he was the only peanut grower in Hale and one of the first in Baldwin. Similarly, he was one of the first farmers to grow 30-inch twin row peanuts and use grid sampling and precision agriculture to perfect his technique over thousands of acres.

Most recently, Jerry has partnered with the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to grow carinata, a plant that has the potential to help meet the renew-

able energy demands of the United States. Along with Northwest Florida scientists, Jerry is testing the viability of carinata in Northwest Florida and its potential use as a source of renewable jet fuel.

The Davis family farming tradition continues today as his wife Patty and daughter Caitlynn are also active on the farm, which comprises cotton, peanuts, wheat, corn, soybeans, vegetables, livestock, and other crops.

Aside from his agricultural contributions, Jerry is known throughout his community for his kind nature and willingness to help others. Jerry has participated in 12 mission trips to Central and South America, spreading his faith and helping those in need, and every Thanksgiving, he and his family donate sweet potatoes that are included in a box of Thanksgiving food that is provided to members of the Escambia and Santa Rosa counties in need.

Despite his busy schedule, Jerry is always happy to promote Northwest Florida agriculture and also has a very extensive civic resume including serving as District 1 Florida Farm Bureau Director since 2009, Santa Rosa County Farm Bureau President, Chairman of the Agricultural Research Committee for Cotton Incorporated, a member of the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Peanut Advisory Committee, a member of the Southern Cotton Growers Farm Bill Task Force, and a director of the Florida and Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. Board.

Mr. Speaker, Northwest Florida and our Nation share a proud agricultural tradition built by the hard work of farmers and their families. The Northwest Florida Agricultural Innovator of the Year Award is a reflection of Jerry's tireless work and dedication to improving farming practices. On behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to offer my congratulations to Jerry Davis for being outstanding in his field. My wife Vicki and I extend our best wishes to him and the Davis family for their continued success.

RECOGNIZING GUITARS FOR HEROES

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a special veterans program in North Texas known as Guitars For Heroes. As an initiative through the Recreation Therapy Services of the VA North Texas Health Care System, the program was founded in 2012 by Fort Worth VA Outpatient Clinic Supervisor Donna Gerron with the objective of assisting veterans through music therapy.

Guitars For Heroes provides veterans 12 sessions of free instruction, acoustic guitars, and accessory kits with the intent of restoring joy and a renewed purpose in life. Veterans from all different backgrounds who are overcoming traumatic experiences, depression, or

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