

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING GOV. TERRY BRANSTAD ON BECOMING THE LONGEST-SERVING GOVERNOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY

HON. PAUL D. RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the whole House, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Governor Terry Branstad on his 7,642nd day in office. He is now the longest-serving governor in American history. And this day of recognition comes not a moment too soon because his principled leadership is a model for us all.

Over the course of his 21 years in office, he has helped the people of Iowa overcome enormous challenges. He inherited a budget deficit; he now presides over a large surplus. When he came in, the state economy had gone bust; now it is booming. And through good times and bad, he has always stood four-square behind his values.

People say he is good at retail politics, and that is certainly true. But his success is more than a testament to his skill. It is a testament to his devotion. Governor Branstad knows that a true public servant lives among the people. He visits all 99 counties of Iowa every year. He can tell you the ins and outs of everything in Iowa—from soybeans to livestock to insurance. He goes to every small event in every small town because he wants to be there. He listens because he cares.

Asked what he wants his legacy to be, Governor Branstad has said he wants Iowa to be a place where young people want to stay—where there is opportunity for all. I could think of no better goal for every governor in the country.

I also think it is fitting that the long-serving governor whose record he has surpassed was George Clinton, a man who left his state to become vice president. For Governor Branstad, national office would have been a step down. He knows his state. He loves his state. The people of Iowa are grateful for his service. I'm grateful for his friendship. And all of us in the House are grateful for his example.

TRIBUTE TO BILL AND MARILYN RYAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Bill and Marilyn Ryan of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1950.

Bill and Marilyn's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Laura, Mary,

Jane, Nancy, Anne, and Carol, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Ryan family that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 65th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, on December 11, 2015, the House of Representatives considered the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015. Regrettably, due to a family commitment I was unable to cast my vote on this legislation. Had I been present, I would have voted yes on the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015.

IN SUPPORT OF OUR CLOSE PARTNER TAIWAN

HON. SCOTT DESJARLAIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. DESJARLAIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the positive steps that our close partner and friend Taiwan has taken in the South China Sea.

On December 12, 2015, the Taiwanese government inaugurated a newly constructed lighthouse and renovated wharf on the Taiping Island, which is the largest natural island of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea and has been administered by Taiwan since 1946. This infrastructure project will help support free and safe passage of ships through the surrounding waters, further enabling Taiwan to offer humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and provide emergency rescue support to passing vessels.

Like the United States, Taiwan is a firm believer in freedom of navigation rights and has actively worked to promote peace and prosperity throughout the South China Sea region. Earlier this year, Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou proposed the South China Sea Peace Initiative, reiterating their government's longstanding position of shelving disputes and promoting joint resource development in these contested waters.

Over the years, Taiwan has continued to play a responsible and peaceful role in the region and as such, I urge my colleagues to join

me in working with our Taiwanese partners to promote our common interests and uphold international law.

HONORING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JOHN FRANCIS DITRO

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Chief Master Sergeant John F. Ditro who will retire from the United States Air Force on December 31, 2015. Chief Master Sergeant Ditro has more than 27 years of combined military service in the United States Navy, the United States Air Force, and the New York Air National Guard.

Chief Ditro entered the United States Navy through the delayed enlistment program in May of 1982 and was called up to active duty in July of that year. In January of 1983, he was assigned to the United States Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, working on truck diesel engines and aviation fuel pumps in support of the Aviation Fuels Division.

After a brief stint in the naval reserves, Chief Ditro re-enlisted in the United States Navy in March of 1986. He was stationed aboard the *Caloosahatchee* and in March of 1988, Chief Ditro was released from the United States Navy. Chief Ditro then began working as a civilian accountant at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and in 1994 he joined the Pennsylvania Air National Guard as a Combat Communications technician. In August of 1995 Chief Ditro accepted a position with the New York Air National Guard working as a Command and Control Battle Management Operations specialist in the Northeast Air Defense Sector. Chief Ditro was activated on September 11, 2001 after the attack on the World Trade Center.

In June of 2002, Chief Ditro transferred to the 174th Fighter Wing located at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base in Syracuse, New York. Chief Ditro was named the Financial Management Superintendent in 2003; under Chief Ditro's management, the financial services office was named the Financial Services Office of the Year in 2008. In June of 2010, Chief Ditro accepted the challenge to become the first Operations Support Squadron Superintendent leading the charge to assist the Operations Group in all missions as the Chief of Intelligence.

Chief Master Sergeant Ditro's major awards and decorations include: Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with 2 Devices, Air Force Achievement Medal, Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, Combat Readiness Medal with 2 Devices, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal with 6 Devices, National Defense Service Medal with

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