

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

### VETERANS MOBILITY SAFETY ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

#### HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 12, 2016*

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2015.

As a Veteran with a service-connected disability, I have personally participated in the Automobile Adaptive Equipment Program (AAEP) and I know how valuable this program is to Veterans across the country.

As a mother of a toddler, I care about the safety of my car more than ever. I am committed to making the best choices for my daughter and strive to keep her out of danger.

My story is not unique. There are so many Veterans out there that depend on the AAEP to provide transportation for their families.

Safety and the quality of services provided to our wounded Veterans should be a top priority.

Last Congress, I wrote a letter to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) urging them to reevaluate the AAEP because it does not require vendors to meet any standards of quality, performance and safety.

I am extremely concerned that this obvious lack of guidelines exposes our most vulnerable Veterans to vendors who manufacture and install subpar, low quality and dangerous equipment.

It can also lead to higher maintenance costs and wastes taxpayer money.

Unfortunately, this gap in the statute allows improper and unsafe installations for our Veterans and also puts the general driving public in harm's way.

The fix here is simple—we must have high quality and certification standards for those who provide automobile adaptive equipment, installations and maintenance for disabled Veterans.

Veterans with disabilities have earned the right to be able to have safe, quality adaptive equipment in their cars that meets their needs and allows them to live full, independent lives.

I urge my Colleagues to support this measure, and to remedy the VA's lack of minimum standards for the AAE program in order to hold vendors accountable, increase quality of VA healthcare and ensure safe driving conditions for Veterans, their families and civilians.

ELDON LAIDIG

#### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 13, 2016*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Eldon Laidig for receiving the West Chamber's 2016 Jefferson County Hall of Fame Award.

Known for his passion for education and community service, Eldon has been a pillar of the Jefferson County community for more than fifty years. Before becoming a financial planner, Eldon spent 42 years in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves and 27 years working for Jefferson County Public Schools, 25 of which were spent as a middle school principal.

In 1990, Eldon became an associate with Personal Benefit Services Wealth Management, which has been recognized by 5280 Magazine and the Arvada Chamber of Commerce. Eldon's involvement in the Arvada community is unparalleled. He was named the Arvada Sentinel's Man of the Year, has served as club president of the Arvada Council for the Arts and Humanities and Arvada Rotary Club and Friendship Force of Greater Denver, as well as vice president of the Arvada Historical Society. In his five decades in the Jefferson County area, Eldon has worked tirelessly to improve the City of Arvada through community service.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Eldon Laidig for this well-deserved recognition by the West Chamber.

### CONGRATULATING MR. RAY JENNINGS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

#### HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 13, 2016*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Mr. Ray Jennings on the occasion of his well-deserved retirement from the Bedford County Airport in Bedford, PA.

Ray began a distinguished military career in the Air Force Air Defense Command, serving tours across North America. From there, his career advanced as he gained extensive international flying experience. He later attended the Air Force Institute of Technology, Squadron Officers School, the Air Command and Staff College, and the University of Illinois, where he studied aeronautical engineering.

Next, Ray spent time helping develop and test aircraft until he was dispatched to Vietnam, where he flew 138 combat missions. As a result of his courageous service, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Purple Hearts, and various Air Medals. After being shot down and rescued, Ray returned home, where he continued to serve his country admirably until his retirement at Andrews Air Force Base.

Following his remarkable military career, Ray was a member of the Bedford County Air Authority from 1985 to 2009, serving as its Secretary and Treasurer from 1994 to 2009. For the past 22 years, Ray has been the Manager of the local Bedford County Airport. Through these experiences, he proved himself instrumental in establishing the Airport as a significant, award-winning asset for the county.

Ray has also provided his extensive experience and service to aviation and transportation

boards at the state and local levels. Additionally, he has been a member of Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission, which has been a notable force in promoting economic and community development in Cambria, Blair, Huntingdon, Somerset, Bedford, and Fulton Counties.

It is my honor to recognize the selfless and impactful career of Mr. Ray Jennings, who not only sacrificed for his country but also his state, community, and family. The impact of his service is sure to live on, and I wish him the absolute best in his hard-earned retirement.

HONORING JOANNE WHITE

#### HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 13, 2016*

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, today the House of Representatives is losing a treasure. After more than 41 years of service, Joanne White, or Miss Joanne as she is affectionately known, is taking her well-earned retirement. She has never been elected, she has never introduced a bill and she has never cast a vote on the House floor but she has meant more to this institution than many of us lucky enough to be called members.

It is no secret that so much of what successful Members are able to accomplish is because of dedicated staff. Staff keeps the trains moving, they sweat the details, and they are the experts on so many of the issues of the day. In her 41 years here, Miss Joanne has done more, seen more, and forgotten more than I ever will. Her experience and institutional knowledge is irreplaceable.

I am fortunate enough to have known Miss Joanne during my time as chairman of the House Ethics Committee, where she has served the past twenty five years. As a new chairman, I was the beneficiary of her accumulated wisdom and the recipient of her sage counsel. Miss Joanne is unique because of her dedication to this institution and her bipartisan service to 13 different Committee chairmen.

While she is retiring today, she is leaving indelible marks behind. The Ethics Committee reflects her warm and gracious demeanor. And, there are two generations of staffers who she taught not how to work for Congress, but how to serve in Congress. Finally, like my predecessors, I am grateful to have had Miss Joanne by my side as I navigated the challenges of chairing the Ethics Committee. She taught me lessons that I will not forget either.

I am indebted to her. Her colleagues are indebted to her. The House of Representatives is indebted to her. As she retires, I wish her happiness and joy as she spends time with her family and friends. Thank you, Joanne, for your service.

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