

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BRIAN HIGGINS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on March 24, 2017, I was not present for the recorded vote on roll call no. 191. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on the motion to order the previous question providing for consideration of H.R. 1628, the American Health Care Act of 2017.

CONGRESSIONAL TEACHERS  
AWARD

**HON. VERN BUCHANAN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of outstanding public school teachers in Florida's 16th Congressional District.

I was once told that children are 25 percent of the population, but they are 100 percent of the future.

And it's true. The education of a child is an investment, not only in that student, but in the future of our country.

Therefore, I established the Congressional Teacher Awards to honor educators for their ability to teach and inspire students.

An independent panel has chosen the following teachers from Manatee, Sarasota, and Hillsborough Counties to receive Florida's 16th District 2015 Congressional Teacher Award for their accomplishments as educators:

Danielle Murphy for her accomplishments as a teacher at Boyette Springs Elementary in Riverview

Carol Pelletier for her accomplishments as a teacher at Sarasota Military Academy Prep in Sarasota

Emilee Vermilion for her accomplishments as a teacher at Southeast High School in Bradenton

On behalf of the people of Florida's 16th District I congratulate each of these outstanding teachers and offer my sincere appreciation for their service and dedication.

HONORING CAPTAIN HUMBERT  
ROQUE "ROCKY" VERSACE ON  
THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL  
MEDAL OF HONOR DAY

**HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the occasion of National Medal of Honor Day

to recognize the heroism "above and beyond the call of duty" of Captain Humbert Roque "Rocky" Versace, USMA Class of 1959. Captain Versace, who was captured by the Viet Cong with two other U.S. soldiers on 29 October 1963, endured nearly 23 months of inhuman treatment at the hands of his communist captors. That included denial of medical treatment (for the 3 bullet wounds he sustained during his capture), insufficient daily food ration, indoctrination attempts, beatings and confinement to a cramped bamboo cage.

Portions of his Medal of Honor citation read: "[H]e demonstrated exceptional leadership and resolute adherence to the tenants of the Code of Conduct from the time he entered into a prisoner of war status . . . he attempted the first of four escape attempts by dragging himself on his hands and knees out of the camp through dense swamp and forbidding vegetation to freedom . . . Captain Versace scorned the enemy's exhaustive interrogation and indoctrination efforts, and inspired his fellow prisoners to resist to the best of their ability. When he used his Vietnamese language skills to protest improper treatment of the American prisoners by the guards, he was put into leg irons and gagged to keep his protestations out of earshot of the other American prisoners in the camp . . ."

The Viet Cong murdered Captain Versace on 26 September 1965. After more than 51 years, Captain Versace is the only U.S. Soldier who received the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War to remain Missing in Action.

COMMEMORATING THE  
RETIREMENT OF BOB EPLING

**HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 27, 2017*

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I, along with Representative ROS-LEHTINEN and Representative CURBELO rise to commemorate the retirement of Mr. Bob Epling.

Bob began his career as an assistant bank examiner with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in Washington, D.C. From there, he moved to South Florida, where he would spend most of the next fifty years. Bob worked for several banks in South Florida, and has served as the President and CEO of Homestead/Community Bank of Florida for the last forty years. Through his work at the bank, he has consistently proven himself to be an honorable, ethical man.

Bob has also been an active member of the South Florida community. He has served as the Chairman of the International Hurricane Center for the past twenty years, serves on the executive board of the South Florida Council of Boy Scouts of America, and is a member of the Military Affairs Committee of the Greater Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce, among many other activities.

Bob is also a Senior Advisor to the Orange Bowl Committee, after serving as its President in 1993. In his work with the Orange Bowl Committee, he was able to break ground on a renovation of the football stadium and field at Harris Field Park in Homestead. This project is just one example of Bob's continuing commitment to making life better for his neighbors in South Florida.

We have known Bob for several decades, and have been consistently impressed with the breadth of his involvement with the community. He has been a loyal friend, and is an honest voice who can speak to the positive qualities of his community as well as the challenges it faces. We congratulate Bob on a remarkable career and a lasting impact made.

Mr. Speaker, we are honored to pay tribute to Mr. Bob Epling for his tremendous service to the South Florida community, and we ask our colleagues to join us in recognizing this remarkable individual.

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ACT OF  
2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. LUKE MESSER**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 24, 2017*

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, in Indiana, we keep life simple. We love God, country, family, and basketball. And, this time of year, during March Madness, not necessarily in that order. Certain principles are sacred, like you do what you said you were going to do. Some want to make today's debate complicated, but the truth is it's pretty simple. For seven years we've told the American people we would repeal Obamacare. Today we have an opportunity to do that. It's not a perfect bill—no bill is. But President Trump has said this is our best and only chance to get this done.

There is some strong policy in this bill. It cuts taxes by hundreds of billions of dollars and government by hundreds of billions. It keeps pre-existing condition prohibitions and lets 26-year-olds stay on their parents' health plans. Most importantly, however, it unshackles American families from a government forced mandate costing them thousands of dollars each year. This bill represents an enormous change away from an era of taxes, mandates, penalties, and government bureaucrats defining what health insurance plan you are allowed to purchase, and into an era where the patient, the consumer, is back in charge.

Despite today's rhetoric, the choice is clear: you can vote to keep Obamacare or vote to end it. It's really that simple. I urge my colleagues to support the bill, keep your promise, and do what you said you would do.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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