

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DAVID JOHNSON

HON. LYNN JENKINS

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 12, 2017

Ms. JENKINS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate David Johnson of Lawrence, Kansas, for his commitment, leadership, and service to the State of Kansas and people struggling with mental illnesses everywhere.

As his tenure as CEO of the Bert-Nash Community Mental Health Center nears its end, and we reflect on his sixteen years serving as CEO, we celebrate the work he has done to positively impact the Lawrence community, Douglas County, the State of Kansas, and beyond.

David demonstrated national leadership as the CEO of a community mental health center by continuing to serve the ever-growing community of Lawrence, while facing the challenge of decreased funding. David has championed initiatives for mental health care such as the Mental Health First Aid grant program and was the person who first brought that program's need and impact to my attention. David has been such an effective national voice for this program that he was invited as a Congressional witness in 2014 to share with Members of Congress the need for the Mental Health First Act of 2013.

As one of the original fourteen people trained as Mental Health First Aid instructors in the country, David undoubtedly encouraged and inspired more people to get that training so they could help their family, friends and neighbors in their time of need.

David is willing to boldly lead on the issue of mental health care and advocate for the millions of Americans hiding in the shadows struggling with mental illness.

When it comes to our home State of Kansas, David has made his imprint through undertaking statewide efforts that help create new opportunities for people with mental illness and their families. These initiatives allow more people to discover and receive the care they need while their families are educated on ways to help their loved ones.

I extend my deepest appreciation to David Johnson for his service and commitment to the State of Kansas and while I am sad to hear of his retirement, I wish him and his family all the best in the years ahead.

HONORING LGBTQ LEADERS IN
THE TWIN CITIES

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 12, 2017

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the transgender, queer, lesbian, bisexual, and gay members of my community as

we begin celebrating Pride. Every year, Twin Cities Pride recognizes individuals and organizations who have devoted their lives to equality. This year, the Grand Marshal is Jana Shortal, and the Community Champions of Pride are Clare Housing and the Avenues for Homeless Youth GLBT Host Homes Program.

Jana Shortal is a journalist, public figure, and co-anchor of KARE 11's Breaking the News, one of the Twin Cities' most popular evening news programs. Jana has garnered a lot of attention across our city—accolades for her coverage of a mom dying of cancer, criticism in the Star Tribune for wearing skinny jeans, and national awards for telling stories about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity. Throughout her career, Jana has been guided by an overarching goal: telling the story. Like she's said herself, "The average person's completely-not-average story motivates me." Often times we get lost in statistics or politics and forget to talk about how it's actually impacting people's lives. Jana's drive to humanize the news is more important now than ever—we can't let elected officials control the narrative just because they dislike the facts. I thank Jana for her service to our community, for her realness on screen, and for her devotion to telling the story.

Clare Housing and Avenues for Homeless Youth provide something that can mean the difference between life and death for LGBTQ folks: a place to live. For 30 years, Clare Housing has provided housing for hundreds of people with HIV or AIDS. They manage multiple apartment buildings for people who are independent, as well as nearly a dozen family homes where people can eat regular meals and have a caseworker assist them with doctor's visits and medicine. We have made tremendous progress on HIV treatment, and it is unacceptable that a lack of access to housing or healthcare means it can still be a death sentence. Thanks to Clare Housing's leadership, HIV positive individuals can get the housing stability they need to keep their bodies healthy.

Avenues for Homeless Youth's GLBT Host Home Program is a national model for community and volunteer-driven efforts to end LGBTQ youth homelessness. Nearly 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ, and many of them were pushed out of their homes due to their gender or sexuality. This program provides not only a roof over their head, but an environment where their identities are validated and supported. Over their 15 year history, the GLBT Host Home Program has helped hundreds of kids grow into happy and healthy adults. No one should be forced into a life of economic struggles simply because their parents are closed minded. The Host Home Program is a tremendous example of what "It takes a village" looks like in practice.

If the last five months have taught us anything, it's that we still have so much work to do. We can't sit back and watch our federal government walk back protections for trans kids, or school districts lead the charge to be-

little and exclude them. We can't accept the talk that we have to wait because there are more important or less divisive issues. LGBTQ equality is deeply connected to economic inequality, racism, sexism, and every other -ism we're fighting against. We must fight for both social and economic equality, because if we don't fight for both, we won't get either. My deepest thanks to these leaders in our community who are showing how we advance equity on all fronts.

RECOGNIZING OSCAR AMEZCUA

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 12, 2017

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mariachi Legend Oscar Amezcua who, from his humble beginnings in Jalisco, Mexico, immigrated to San Diego in 1945 and quickly became an icon in Hispanic culture. Oscar's skills earned him a spot on the renowned Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, which was just the start of his distinguished career. Oscar would go on to establish his own group, Mariachi Guadalajara, all while raising his three sons Carlos, Oscar, Alex, and his daughter Lucia with his wonderful wife Gloria.

Oscar Amezcua has dedicated his life to creating and providing us with music that has made significant contributions to San Diego's music and culture and is credited by many with bringing Mariachi music to San Diego. Recently, at the age of 87, Oscar celebrated this past Cinco de Mayo celebration by performing at a special concert in San Diego's famous Balboa Park and was recognized by San Diego Mayor Kevin Falconer, who declared May 5, 2017, as "Oscar Amezcua Day—The Father of San Diego Mariachi Music."

I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in recognizing Oscar's contributions to San Diego's music and Hispanic culture and I look forward to his continued involvement for years to come.

AMANDA ALVARADO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 12, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Amanda Alvarado for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Amanda Alvarado is a student at Molholm Elementary School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Amanda Alvarado is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and

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