

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DEBBIE BYLER FOR RECEIVING THE PATIENT ADVOCATE AWARD FROM THE HEALTHSOUTH REHABILITATION HOSPITAL OF ALTOONA

**HON. BILL SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 8, 2017*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Debbie Byler of Martinsburg, PA, winner of the Patient Advocate Award from the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Altoona.

Debbie is cofounder and coordinator of John's Way Medical Equipment Ministry, a faith-based outreach program of Clover Creek Church of the Brethren. John's Way provides wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds and other medical equipment to individuals who do not have the necessary funds or medical insurance.

Debbie has been instrumental in the growth of John's Way which donated 16 pieces of equipment in its first year in 2009. Last year, the program made available more than 4,200 items to those in need. She oversees 40 volunteers who take requests, clean and repair equipment, pick up donations and deliver items to clients.

Debbie and her work at John's Way have had a significant, positive impact on the local community. Given her admirable actions in support of individuals and families facing hardship, Debbie is unquestionably deserving of this recognition. As such, it is my honor to help celebrate her having received this award.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LUCIANO 'LUCKY' VARELA

**HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 8, 2017*

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life and legacy of a true public servant and a dear friend from my home state of New Mexico.

I have been fortunate in my life to have had the example, the mentorship and the friendship of some truly extraordinary individuals. I was deeply saddened to learn that one of those extraordinary individuals, former State Representative Luciano 'Lucky' Varela, is no longer with us.

Lucky was a political giant in New Mexico, a true public servant who was loved and respected by all who knew him. Representative Varela was seen by many as the conscience of the New Mexico Legislature—caring, knowledgeable, and always ready to lend a hand to anyone in need. During his 30 years of dedicated service, he became one of New Mexico's most profound political leaders, and one of our state's best representatives for working families.

Lucky represented a Santa Fe-area House seat in the Roundhouse from 1987 through 2016, where he served as chairman of the influential Finance Committee, among other important committee posts. When it came to state finances and fiscal matters, Lucky's command of the subject was encyclopedic. One of his colleagues once said that Lucky had probably forgotten more about state finances than the experts that appeared before his committee ever knew. Truer words were never spoken. Over the course of his long and memorable career, Varela was a champion for fair wages and reasonable pay increase for state employees, and protecting those who served our state by working in state government. When Lucky saw a problem, he acted to correct it.

His leadership and compassion shined throughout his life. He inspired those who got to know him and many who never met him. His life and his service have left an indelible imprint on the thousands of New Mexicans he helped while in office, but even more importantly, Lucky Varela's legacy will live on through the many people he mentored and relationships he fostered.

Before I close, I want to share some of the remembrances from those who knew him and worked with him.

Senator TOM UDALL said Lucky "represented the people of Santa Fe with honor, integrity and heart. He will be remembered for his honesty about the need to address our challenges in order to move our state forward, and especially for his deep knowledge of the state budget and its impact on everyone in New Mexico."

"Lucky truly made New Mexico a better place. He understood the numbers; just as importantly, he understood the people behind those numbers—their struggles, hopes and dreams. He gave selflessly to the people of Santa Fe and the entire state of New Mexico, and we are better for his leadership. We will miss him dearly."

Former Governor Bill Richardson called Lucky "a master legislator whose expertise on the budget and finances was unparalleled. He was also a gentle soul who cared deeply about his Santa Fe constituents and his wonderful family."

Regarding Lucky, Attorney General Hector Balderas said he was "grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to serve under his leadership in the New Mexico House of Representatives. He was a strong voice for New Mexico's children, families and state employees."

New Mexico House Speaker Brian Egolf called Lucky "a stalwart advocate for working people, for using our resources wisely, and for the people of Santa Fe. Lucky was beloved in Santa Fe for many reasons, not the least of which was that he knew more about the state's budget than most of us ever will. He never shied away from asking tough questions and giving selflessly of his time and energy to make New Mexico a better state."

We will miss Lucky, but we will never forget him.

RECOGNIZING NORTHWEST INDIANA'S NEW CITIZENS

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 8, 2017*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and sincerity that I take this time to congratulate thirty individuals who will take their oaths of citizenship on Friday, September 15, 2017. This memorable occasion, presided over by Judge Philip P. Simon, will be held at the United States Courthouse and Federal Building in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the world to the United States in search of better lives for their families. Oath ceremonies are a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America—that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success than here in America.

On September 15, 2017, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oaths of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Dominic Kwadwo Manu, Anas Hashem Mohammad Salameh, Mikhail Gennadiyevich Kapustin, Beata Joanna Nabrzyska, Jaroslaw Nabrzyski, Radoslaw Jan Nabrzyski, Daniel Joseph Perfilio Smith, Ramiro Malagon Ramirez, Ma Marina Diaz de Malagon, Martha Alicia Vargas Somosa, Raymundo Ibis Quintas Garcia, Sheri Ahmady, Monica Diaz Nevarez, Susana Jasna Diurych Diaz, Lola Li Fuller, Luz Maria Hernandez, Hana Kang, Biljana Loskoski, Leticia Noguez, Jose Angel Recio, Juan Carlos Rodriguez, Andres Saragoza, Farhat Naheed Shiekh, Swetha Vinjimoor, and Anna Sijie Xiong.

Although each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country "... of the people, by the people, and for the people." They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision that they want to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals who will become citizens of the United States of America on September 15, 2017. They, too, will be American citizens, guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate them and welcome them.

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