

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## CONGRATULATING MS. MARIA DIAZ ON HER RETIREMENT

### HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 9, 2018*

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Maria Diaz on her retirement. For over thirty-five years, Maria has supported my constituents with advice, information, and guidance on Social Security matters.

Maria began her extensive career in public service as a co-op student working at the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Little Havana Field Office in Florida. Through her dedication and hard work, Maria was swiftly promoted to the position of Claims Service Representative in the Perrine Field Office. Her invaluable contributions were recognized when, in 1990, she was promoted to Operations Supervisor in the Perrine Office, where she continuously displayed a high level of attentiveness and care.

In September 2001, Ms. Diaz's strengths were acknowledged when she was appointed Public Affairs Specialist of the South Florida Area and the Atlanta Region, a position she held until her retirement. In this capacity, she has represented the SSA with an outstanding degree of professionalism and has remained steadfast with the main goal of the Administration, which is to serve the public. She continuously provided our community members with timely and relevant information and cultivated media and community contacts to ensure messages were delivered in a concise and positive manner. Throughout her impressive career, Maria demonstrated her commitment to public service and efficiently resolved our constituents' Social Security issues.

In recognition of her invaluable contributions to the SSA, Maria has received numerous awards, including multiple Commissioner Citations, which is the highest honor conferred upon SSA employees. Maria's support to my constituents over the years has been remarkable and her dedication to her job commendable.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Maria Diaz for her outstanding service to our community, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

## CELEBRATING MRS. BETTIE J. BROUSSARD CURTIS

### HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 9, 2018*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Bettie J. Broussard Curtis, a distinguished educator and woman of profound spiritual convictions. Mrs. Curtis was

born and raised in Orange, Texas to her parents Shelton and Ophelia Broussard. Coming from a family of thirteen, Mrs. Curtis learned a strong work ethic and faith in God from her parents which no doubt led to her success. Mrs. Curtis married her husband James Ilenon Curtis in 1963 and was married for 31 years before his demise.

Mrs. Curtis received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Education from Wiley College and a Master of Education Degree in Business from Texas Southern University in Houston. While pursuing her advanced studies she taught at both Texas Southern and Lamar University.

Mrs. Curtis is best known for her 56 years as a business education teacher for West Orange-Cove CISD where she inspired her students with her beautiful smile, gracious demeanor, and the skills necessary for success in the global workplace. The school district honored her by naming the new elementary school library the Bettie J. Curtis Library.

Mrs. Curtis has always shown a strong commitment to civic and political organizations throughout her community—she was named the first African American to serve as President of District V Texas State Teachers Association as well as involvement in National Education Association, Texas Business and Technology Educators Association, National Business Education Association, NAACP, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Top Ladies of Distinction. Mrs. Curtis has also received countless awards including Teacher of the Year, Outstanding Educator and Woman of the Year at Mount Olive Baptist Church just to name a few.

On Saturday, January 13, 2018 Mrs. Curtis will be presented with the Blossoming Minds MLK Gala Legend Award, and for this I congratulate her. This award is a testament to her passionate service to others and unwavering commitment to her community and faith in God. It is my privilege to honor her for this special achievement and incredible career.

## HIGH FIVE

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 9, 2018*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I salute the Houston Fire Department and Houston City Councilmember Brenda Stardig for their rescue efforts during Hurricane Harvey.

In a move that can only be described as divine intervention, HFD's new high water rescue vehicle was delivered only a few days before one of Texas's most devastating storms rocked the state and dumped more than 50 inches of rain in the Houston area. When Councilmember Stardig used her district's discretionary funds to purchase the high water rescue vehicle for HFD she knew it was a much needed addition to the city's rescue fleet; she just didn't know how timely her purchase would be.

Called the "High Five" because it is docked at HFD Station 5 in my congressional district, HFD's high water rescue vehicle was the only high water rescue vehicle available exclusively to the city of Houston during the hurricane. The "High Five" is a heavy duty military vehicle that can carry 15 people and two operators. Its electronics and fuel system are sealed, giving it the ability to transport in more than four feet of water.

Other vehicles like city garbage trucks were used for rescues, but this vehicle is unique because it is designed not only to go through high water but to also rescue people easily. For example, it has a lift on it to assist people in getting on board. Mr. Speaker, even my jeep with its lift kit is no match for what this vehicle can do. It was estimated that in one day, over 400 people were rescued with this truck and possibly 1,000 people total.

Since the storm, HFD has received a surge of donations to continue to upgrade their rescue fleet. Councilmember Stardig and the Firefighters Foundation of Houston recently raised more than \$52,000—enough for two additional rescue boats. Since Harvey, private donors like HEB and Metro National have stepped up to help fund two additional high water rescue vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, much of my district and the Houston area are still reeling from Harvey's damage. Much work remains to be done. It is heroes like Assistant Chief Ruy Lozano who oversees the HFD rescue fleet, HFD Chief Sam Peña, and Houston City Councilmember Brenda Stardig who rose up during his catastrophe to save lives. Many of us will remember their contributions to our community during this crisis. We always say, when Houstonians see a need they step up. Sometimes it's into a 10-foot high water rescue vehicle.

And that's just the way it is.

## RECOGNIZING RICHARD LEE

### HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, January 9, 2018*

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Mr. Richard Lee, a dedicated public servant and dear friend. Mr. Lee is retiring this January from his position as executive director of the Waukegan Public Library after fifteen years of extraordinary service on behalf of our community.

Under his leadership, the Waukegan Public Library has become an indispensable resource for our local community, a place where residents can gather to learn, collaborate on school homework, or even just hang out with Lizzy, the library's bearded dragon.

Throughout Mr. Lee's tenure, the library expanded its programs to offer literacy classes covering everything from English language learning to computer skills to basic reading, writing, and math skills for adults. Mr. Lee also oversaw a \$1.2 million renovation that finished

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