

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a world-class athlete and Olympian from the 22nd Congressional District, Erin Hamlin.

Four-time Olympian and two-time world champion luger, Erin Hamlin carried the Team USA flag during the 2018 Winter Olympic opening ceremony in Pyeongchang, South Korea, last Friday. Following a vote from her fellow athletes, Erin was selected from eight other athletes to enter her last Olympic Games as the flagbearer.

Erin made history in 2014 as the first U.S. athlete to win a singles luge medal after taking home the Olympic Bronze Medal at the Sochi Games. She made history again as the fourth luger to serve as the United States flagbearer and the first since 2010.

During Friday's Parade of Nations, Erin led 244 athletes, the largest team ever from the United States. Yesterday, she competed in the last race of her outstanding career.

Erin will be remembered as someone who shattered barriers for both men and women in the sport of luge. Please join me in congratulating Oneida County's and Remsen, New York's own rock star, Erin Hamlin, on these incredible achievements.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHICAGO POLICE COMMANDER PAUL BAUER

(Mr. LIPINSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of Chicago Police Commander Paul Bauer, who was shot and killed in the line of duty yesterday. This is a terrible tragedy for the Chicago Police Department, our city, and, most of all, Paul's wife and young daughter.

Paul Bauer graduated 2 years ahead of me at Saint Ignatius and joined the police department soon after, when he was just 21 years old. He rose through the ranks over 32 years to lead the mounted horse unit and, later, became commander of the Near North District.

A member of Nativity Parish in Bridgeport, Paul is being remembered as a loving father and husband, someone who knew the value of community policing and giving back, and for leading efforts to raise funds for the Chicago Police Memorial Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning the passing of Commander Paul Bauer. Please pray for him, his family, and for our city.

Please remember to take a moment to thank the police and other first responders that you encounter every day. We owe them so much.

PROTECTING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Health and

Human Services' new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the Office of Civil Rights.

Recently, they announced a proposed rule to protect workers in HHS-funded programs from being coerced into practicing activities that violate their conscience, including abortion, sterilization, assisted suicide, and more.

Under the previous administration, doctors and nurses were not protected from being forced to participate in procedures that may violate their religious beliefs or moral convictions. This is clearly wrong. Those who are discriminated against for their religious beliefs should be afforded the same protections as those facing any other types of discrimination.

OCR has now opened a 60-day public comment period on the rule. I encourage everyone across the country to participate in that comment period.

I thank the Division once again for taking this important action to protect religious liberty in our healthcare system.

HONORING THE LIFE OF AUSTIN DAVIS

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the life of Austin Davis, who visited Las Vegas to attend the Route 91 concert on October 1.

Austin was an only child who was very close to his parents. He lived in Riverside, California, and worked as a pipefitter. During his free time, Austin loved to play softball. All of those who knew him remember Austin for his contagious smile and hardworking nature.

I extend my condolences to Austin Davis' family and his friends. Please know that the city of Las Vegas, the State of Nevada, and the whole country grieve with you.

□ 1730

HONORING SAM JOHNSON

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our colleague and my fellow Texan, SAM JOHNSON. This week marks 45 years since he returned to freedom after enduring nearly 7 years as a prisoner of war in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Each February, we are reminded of the heroism, perseverance, and leadership that SAM JOHNSON displayed during his time as a prisoner of war. We are also reminded of the persistence of SAM's family and their joy and the joy of our north Texas community and the American people when SAM returned home to Texas in 1973.

SAM JOHNSON has served our country selflessly—first through his distin-

guished Air Force career, and then here in the House of Representatives. Since he was elected to the House in 1991, he has been an advocate for our Armed Forces, our veterans, and American freedom.

Mr. Speaker, 15 years ago, I gave my first floor speech, marking 30 years since Mr. JOHNSON returned home. Today it is a distinct privilege to honor my friend and mentor on his 45th "returniversary."

SAM JOHNSON, welcome home.

HONORING WORLD WAR II VETERAN WILLIAM JOHN TOMKA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor World War II veteran William John Tomka, with whom I had the recent pleasure of joining to celebrate his 100th birthday on January 27, 2018.

Born in Dover, New Jersey, to immigrant parents, William spent his formative years in New Jersey developing a love of music. This resulted in him becoming a music teacher until he was drafted into the United States Army on July 11, 1941.

He left a successful job teaching in New Jersey to defend our great Nation. After completing his radio operations training at Fort Dix and Fort Bragg, he was deployed to Iceland as part of the 50th Signal Battalion in which he served as a technical sergeant leading a group of eight men who were also trained radio operators.

His team was responsible for code, receiving and transmitting from the field, as well as in command vehicles. This group was part of the first American Army personnel to be sent in the European Theater of Operations.

After 22 months in Iceland, he was sent to England to be a part of the invasion force of France on D-day. He was dropped onto Utah Beach on June 6, 1944, and bravely fought through the entire campaign of Europe, including the American bombardment of the German forces at Saint-Lo. He and his fellow soldiers later proceeded to serve at the Battle of the Bulge.

When recounting his most memorable times in the Army, Mr. Tomka will tell you about his time in Europe after D-day. He told me about his time in France, where he witnessed American fighter pilots bomb the German forces, and of his time served in joint force with the Russians at the river of Elbe.

Mr. Tomka was discharged after 3½ years of foreign duty on June 22, 1945. After his years of service, Mr. Tomka went back to his passion of teaching music. He started an instrumental music program in the Ridgefield school system of New Jersey. During his years of music education, Mr. Tomka obtained his master's degree from NYU in supervision and administration.