

infrastructure connects not just the two States, but the entire region between Boston and Washington, D.C. Because Gateway is so important to everyone in the Northeast, a substantial Federal commitment is necessary to make this project a reality.

The Gateway Project is far too important to be left unfunded. Gateway should not be sacrificed because of President Trump's political animosity.

RECOGNIZING JESSICA MELNIK FOR HER WORK IN FIGHTING AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Jessica Melnik, a junior at Hopkins High School and the founder of a student-run nonprofit, Girls United Minnesota, for her work fighting against sex trafficking.

Jessica, along with fellow members of Girls United Minnesota, took action to spread awareness after they observed a fellow classmate who was a target of sex trafficking. They soon realized that Minnesota ranks 13th in the Nation for its prevalence of sexual exploitation and they stepped forward to do something about it.

Girls United Minnesota started by working with local law enforcement and nonprofits to organize public awareness events throughout our community. Jessica and her friends are also working with State legislators in Minnesota to expand education on sex trafficking in schools and create more resources for the victims of sexual exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, the determination and the hard work of Jessica and her classmates at Girls United Minnesota is nothing short of inspiring, and their impact is literally helping to save lives.

CONGRATULATING TRINI GARZA HIGH SCHOOL

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Trini Garza High School for earning the designation of National Title I Distinguished School for the 2016–2017 school year.

This exclusive designation is given to high-poverty schools that excel in either student performance or for its work to close the achievement gap. Garza, with a student body that is 86 percent economically disadvantaged, was one of 34 schools across the Nation to be praised “for its exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years.”

Garza's designation would not be possible without the strong partnerships of its educators, parents, students, and the Oak Cliff community in Dallas. Each of you have made sure that we

are doing our part to empower our future leaders with the tools they need to succeed.

Congratulations, Trini Garza High School, for your well-deserved recognition.

VIETNAMESE OF LINCOLN

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to join the Lincoln Vietnamese community in the celebration of the Vietnamese New Year, the Year of the Dog. I celebrated this special occasion at St. Andrew Dung-Lac and Companions Catholic Church in Lincoln, where I live, and I participated in the Catholic mass, followed by a community festival complete with traditional dragon dancers. I would like to thank Father Joseph Nguyen and the parish community for their generosity and hospitality.

Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 2 million persons of Vietnamese descent living in America. My hometown of Lincoln has become home for nearly 10,000 Vietnamese Americans, some of whom faced the trauma of persecution, escape, open seas, refugee camps, and, finally, resettlement in a new home.

Our vibrant, well-respected Vietnamese community has become an integral part of Lincoln's cultural traditions and adds to our capital city's vibrant tapestry. Vietnamese is the third most commonly spoken language in the Cornhusker State, and I have actively encouraged the youth to keep the great tradition alive.

Mr. Speaker, it is not advisable to try a language that you don't speak, but to my Vietnamese friends, I would like to try: “thank you,” “cam o'n ban.”

REMEMBERING FRANK HESS

(Mr. ESPAILLAT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember my neighbor and longtime friend, Frank Hess, who formerly served as special assistant to the legendary New York State Assembly member Denny Farrell, who, for many years, chaired the prestigious Ways and Means Committee.

Frank was known for his cowboy hats and brutal honesty. He devoted his life to public service and spent almost 30 years in government. He was a devoted godfather, uncle, and father figure to anyone in the community who knew him. He once called 20 stores and drove for 2 hours to try to find a pair of shoes for his niece.

Frank was a devoted person to his family and his community. Through his lifetime devotion to public service, he made sure Washington Heights was a better place for all of us. Frank could accomplish anything he set his mind to

and he could unite different groups of people despite any racial, ethnic, or religious differences. He lived his life demonstrating what it means to be a contributing citizen and to serve as a role model for those, like myself, who were fortunate to know him.

I will miss Frank Hess. He will forever be missed by our community.

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HONORING THE LIFE OF DANA GARDNER

(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 Dana Gardner, who attended the Route 91 music festival in Las Vegas on October 1.

Dana worked for San Bernardino County, California, for 26 years in the Assessor-Recorder Office. When she went home for the day, she always made sacrifices for her three children and two grandchildren. She wanted to make sure that her kids understood the importance of loving and caring for all humans. She did this through her actions as a dedicated public servant.

Dana was an amazing cook who had just begun to travel more and spend more time with her friends. She had a contagious smile and a great sense of humor that could light up a room. She is remembered by all those who knew her as a go-to person with a lot of knowledge and a can-do attitude.

I would like to extend my condolences to Dana Gardner's family and friends. Please know that the city of Las Vegas, the State of Nevada, and the whole country grieve with you.

SISTER MARY SCULLION

(Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a distinguished Philadelphian who will be leading our city's annual St. Patrick's Day parade as grand marshal, Sister Mary Scullion.

Sister Mary is a towering figure and a driving force for social change in Philadelphia. She belongs to the Sisters of Mercy, the third largest congregation of Sisters in Philadelphia, and is the cofounder of Project HOME, an influential nonprofit that seeks to break the cycle of homelessness.

Since 1989, Sister Mary's organization has helped provide shelter to the homeless, set up programs for at-risk youth across the city, and organized wellness and healthcare services. She has also been a leader at the city, State, and Federal level to bring about awareness and much-needed funding to address the root causes of homelessness.

As a religious and community leader, Sister Mary has become a household

name in Philadelphia and a champion for the voiceless in our city. It is fitting that she has been selected to lead this year's St. Patrick's Day parade, and I rise to commend her on her lifetime of devoted service.

ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, today is the 53rd anniversary of Bloody Sunday. This is the day that our incredible colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, and Dr. Martin Luther King led 600 marchers from Selma to Montgomery. They didn't get very far. At the Edmund Pettus Bridge, they were viciously attacked by Alabama State Troopers wielding clubs and were beaten and left bloodied.

Last weekend, I had the incredible honor of joining Congressman JOHN LEWIS and a bipartisan group of Members in a pilgrimage to Montgomery, Birmingham, Selma, and Memphis. I had many epiphanies on that trip, but perhaps two were most profound. First, that determined and disciplined non-violent resistance works. Back then, 53 years ago, it led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And, second, that we in this body have a critical responsibility to ensure that we move forward and not backward on voting rights.

Our trip was amazing. One of the best experiences of my life, actually. I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join next year. We heard incredible stories of abiding love, even for adversaries that had left people without much dignity. Newer activists of all ages are reimagining these same nonviolent methods for the world that we are in today.

Today, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, let us recommit ourselves to restoring and strengthening the Voting Rights Act and making sure that we continue to protect these critical rights in our country.

RECOGNIZING ROME ELKS LODGE #96

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Rome Elks.

Hailing from Rome Elks Lodge #96 on Liberty Street, our hometown Elks truly embody the mission the Elks National Foundation has been committed to for over 140 years. For generations, Elks around the Nation have dedicated themselves to building strong communities and lending a helping hand to their fellow neighbors.

Today I would like to recognize an outstanding group of hometown Elks who have made the journey from Oneida County to visit us here in Washington: Donna Townsend; Whitney Cook; Mary Bielby; and retired captain of the Rome Police Department, John Bielby.

Our Elks in Rome and around the country help our youth develop lifelong skills, assist students who are attending college, support charitable work in their communities, and care for our local veterans.

However, Rome Elks are unique to all other Elks in the country. In addition to the honorable work of the Elks, Rome Elks also carry out the longstanding tradition of caring for the gravesite of a historic Rome native, Sir Francis Bellamy. Some of you may not know it, but Sir Francis Bellamy is the author of our uniquely American tradition, the Pledge of Allegiance.

Francis Bellamy was born in Mount Morris, New York, attended our Rome public schools, and graduated from Rome Free Academy, affectionately known as RFA, in 1872.

Every day throughout our country, in public and parochial schools; at Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings; at American Legions and all fraternal and patriotic organizations; in government, including here in our Nation's Capitol, millions of Americans recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance reminds our citizenry of the notion of what it means to be American. We pledge allegiance to this great experiment; to our constitutional Republic, a nation that reveres freedoms, individual rights, and liberty. We pledge allegiance to our country's historic Judeo-Christian values.

Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892 at the age of 37. During his time working as a writer for a magazine called "The Youth's Companion," a family magazine that, at the time, had 500,000 subscribers, Bellamy was tasked with creating a patriotic school program to honor the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival to America. Through this assignment, the Pledge of Allegiance, as we know it today, took shape.

At a trying time in our Nation's history, Francis Bellamy captured so elegantly and simply America's unity and loyalty. With only a sentence, Bellamy ultimately symbolized America's ability to surpass all internal differences. It is the manifestation of our patriotic conscience and it is recognized throughout our Nation.

Francis Bellamy's spirit pervades in Rome to this day, especially during patriotic holidays, like Flag Day. On Flag Day, the Rome Elks replace the two American flags that fly over Sir Francis Bellamy's gravesite. These annual ceremonies are a dedication to the patriotic principles that our flag has stood for since it was first adopted in 1777. In 2008, the Rome Elks started a significant renovation project on Bel-

lamy's gravesite, and completed it 1 year later, just in time to rededicate it for Flag Day.

In addition to their work in honoring Sir Francis Bellamy and the American flag, the Rome Elks are also well known for their commitment to helping our local veterans.

Recently, the Rome Elks held a fundraiser to raise money for therapy dogs for veterans through a local organization called Clear Path for Vets. As part of the fundraiser, the Rome Elks took flags that had flown over Sir Francis Bellamy's gravesite and removed the stars and stripes. They then individually separated and added a slip of paper with the words "This little star is proud to say I flew over Bellamy's grave." The Rome Elks call this project "Stars Over Bellamy."

They started with 300 of these little packets, but quickly added 200 more when they realized how popular this projects was. To date, the Rome Elks have raised over \$1,000 for this fundraising effort. One of the most touching aspects is that every veteran that a Rome Elks member comes across receives one of these stars for free as a thank-you for their years of service.

I was lucky enough to be able to purchase a star for myself and a few others for my son, who is currently serving in the Marine Corps. It is a constant reminder for me of the legacy Francis Bellamy left for our country, as well as the patriotic principles I as a member of the Ilion Elks Lodge #1444—a nearby Elks Lodge down the street—have come to live by.

These are just a few examples of the hard work and devotion that the Rome Elks show for their community. The Rome Elks bring so much more to the community than just a building. Although it is a beautiful, historic building on Liberty Street—aptly named—in Rome, New York, they invest in programs that help children grow up healthy and drug-free, meet the needs of today's veterans, and improve the quality of life for our area.

As I mentioned, as a member of the nearby Ilion Elks Lodge #1444, I am proud to know and work with so many outstanding Elks and members throughout our region. I also am excited to participate in our benevolent Elks Lodge, which has a motorcycle ride each year, where we travel to each of the Elks Lodges and raise money for charities that help many of our veterans in need.

So I just want to say, if you happen to be visiting our region, take the time to stop by one of our wonderful Elks Lodges. They have weekly events. Particularly in the Rome Elks Lodge, they have Tuesday Wing Night, Wednesday Night Spaghetti Supper, Fish Fry Friday, or one of our special events on the weekends or holidays. It is really a beautiful and wonderful time to meet and have fellowship with a community that is so patriotic and so devoted to our Nation.

Today I urge all my colleagues and anyone watching at home to thank