

Mr. Speaker, I thank the USO for its dedication to our servicemembers and their families.

JANUS V. AFSCME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, too many working families still struggle to pay their bills, to take care of their families, and to save for their kids to go to college or to take care of aging parents.

The middle class—households with an income between 67 and 200 percent of median income—is shrinking and income inequality is growing. Wage stagnation means more families will need safety net services like SNAP—food stamps—and housing assistance at a time when the majority in Congress is trying to cut those programs.

What should we be doing?

Consider this. Unions helped build the middle class. Unionized teachers, nurses, and firefighters have better access to paid holidays, paid sick leave, and retirement benefits, and less need for safety net services.

When workers have the right to join together and have a voice in the workplace, it is also good for nonunion workers who benefit from those higher standards.

Unfortunately, here in Congress and across the street at the Supreme Court, with the Janus v. AFSCME case, working families and organized labor are under attack.

To grow our economy and reduce the need for safety net programs, we should make it easier, not harder, for workers to form unions and collectively bargain. Until we do, we will continue to see a shrinking middle class.

RECOGNIZING 93RD BIRTHDAY OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALBERT "BUZ" STEBBINS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor today to recognize the 93rd birthday of a true American hero, Lieutenant Colonel "Buz" Stebbins.

Just after Lieutenant Colonel Stebbins turned 20 years old, he graduated from West Point in 1945. He served as a pilot in the Army Air Corps and the United States Air Force for 28 years.

During that time, Buz piloted scores of military aircraft, including the honor of taking delivery from Lockheed of one of the first C5A Galaxy cargo aircraft, the largest cargo aircraft in the world. He flew 70 missions to Vietnam in support of our troops engaged in that war. While stationed in Germany, he became a member of the Caterpillar Club, whose membership is restricted to those who have had to bail out of a disabled aircraft.

During his military career, Colonel Stebbins also served as a professor of physics at both West Point and the United States Air Force Academy.

Retiring in 1973, Colonel Stebbins chose to reside in the great city of Tega Cay, South Carolina, which is in my Fifth Congressional District. He became very active in the community, and was instrumental in Tega Cay being incorporated as a city in 1982. He has been honored by a number of organizations in the community, including Citizen of the Year, grand marshal of the Independence Day parade, and many more.

Colonel Stebbins exemplifies the motto of the great school of West Point: Duty, Honor, Country.

Buz, happy 93rd birthday on May 31. We look forward to many more years of you doing what you continue to do.

NATIONAL MARITIME DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of an extraordinary group of people.

Yesterday was National Maritime Day, and I rise to bring attention to the House legislation that I recently introduced, H.R. 5879, the World War II Merchant Marine Congressional Gold Medal. I hear the cheers from all of my colleagues here on the floor as they line up to support this piece of legislation.

Last year, my colleague, SUSAN BROOKS, my good Republican friend, introduced this legislation. I am grateful to her and to Congressman DON YOUNG of Alaska for their support of this legislation this year. This bill has obvious bipartisan support and bicameral support. Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska is leading this bill in what some call the upper Chamber; we simply call it the Senate.

During World War II, our Armed Forces relied upon the Merchant Marine to ferry supplies, cargo, manpower and womanpower into both theaters of operation: the Pacific and the Atlantic. They paid a heavy price for their service.

The Merchant Marine casualty rate was the highest among all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. An estimated 8,300 merchant mariners lost their life during the war, and around 12,000 were wounded. But these brave men and women, who put their lives on the line to sustain our Armed Forces, were not even given veteran status until 1988, much less public recognition for their invaluable service.

Today, I am going to meet with a group of World War II Merchant Marine veterans: Charles Mills from Texas, age 97; Eugene Barner from Kansas, age 92; and Robert Weagant from Illinois, age 92. I will also be meeting with families of other veterans who are no longer with us. I am meeting them to hear

firsthand their stories of bravery and peril in the service of our Armed Forces. They deserve the recognition of a Congressional Gold Medal, and that is precisely what this legislation will do.

I urge all of the Members of this House and the Senate to give our Merchant Marine veterans and their families the honor they deserve.

I will also be discussing with these gentlemen and their families a piece of legislation that we introduced the day before yesterday, we call it the Energizing the American Shipbuilding Industry—taking a small percentage of the oil and natural gas that we are now exporting and requiring that that be on American-built ships with American mariners, so that we can maintain the extraordinary tradition of bravery and service that the World War II mariners showed this Nation.

If we are successful in passing this legislation, we will be building some 50 ships, or more, in our shipyards all across America, providing jobs in the upper Midwest, where they build the great engines for these ships: the pumps, the pipes, and the electronic systems. We would also be providing some 1,800 jobs for the next generation of mariners.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues not only to support the Congressional Gold Medal for the World War II mariners, but support our effort to create mariners for the next generation, which, hopefully, will not be a war but, if it is, we know that we can rely on them, just as we did in World War II.

RECOGNIZING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MONROE, LOUISIANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Monroe, Louisiana.

The Monroe Rotary Club started on June 1, 1918, and its centennial birthday marks 100 years of service, charity, and dedication from the members over the years. Today, the club has grown to over 140 members, and it is involved in service projects throughout the Monroe area.

The Monroe Rotary Club promotes education, local economic growth, and clean water availability locally, nationally, and around the world just to promote the innate ability to drink clean water.

Members of this club are the problem solvers that collaborate with the community leaders, many of whom are members themselves, to lead and continue to lead on issues that are facing the Monroe area.

In this year alone, the Monroe Rotary Club has donated over 1,000 books to inmates at the Swanson Correctional Center, awarded 11 \$250 scholarships to high school seniors, and donated 95 bicycles to children in need