

for people who served in the sea services during the Vietnam conflict and who are being denied access to VA benefits for the scourge of Agent Orange illnesses.

Again, this is a process that has taken forever. We passed this measure in the last Congress by unanimous vote. It was blocked from consideration by two Senators last December.

Congratulations to MARK TAKANO, our new House Committee on Veterans' Affairs chairman, for bringing up this bill immediately in the new House of Representatives, to make sure that we get this long-overdue justice for people who served in the Vietnam conflict taken care of.

Veterans service organizations that have been relentless in their advocacy for blue water Vietnam veterans, such as The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS, MOAA, and Military Order of the Purple Heart, are supporting this legislation.

It is going to be important for us to get this bill passed out of this Chamber and force the Senate to do the right thing and provide justice for those who served in that conflict and who are still suffering from cancers, from heart disease, and from skin ailments because of exposure to a chemical that they had absolutely no idea was unsafe.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2019 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Cliff Stearns, vice president of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8 a.m.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of history, we thank You for this day, when former Members return to Congress to continue, in a less official manner, their service to our Nation and to this noble institution.

May their presence here bring a moment of pause where current Members consider the profiles they now form for future generations of Americans.

May all former Members be rewarded for their contributions to this constitutional Republic and continue to work and pray that the goodness and justice of this beloved country be proclaimed to the nations.

Bless all former Members who have died since last year's meeting—24 in all. May their families and their constituents be comforted during a time of mourning and forever know our gratitude for the sacrifices made in service to Congress.

Finally, bless those here gathered, that they might bring joy and hope to the present age and supportive companionship to one another.

Together, we call upon Your holy name, now and forever.

Amen.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Cliff Stearns led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. STEARNS. The Chair now recognizes the president of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress, the Honorable Martin Frost of Texas, to address the Members.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Cliff. It is always a distinct privilege to be back in this revered Chamber and to see so many of my good friends and former colleagues here.

On behalf of FMC, I appreciate the Speaker's invitation to return to this wonderful place and to present to Congress FMC's 49th annual report.

I will be joined by some of our colleagues in reporting on FMC's activities and vision for the future.

I also am submitting, for the RECORD, a more detailed review of FMC's 2018 activities.

First, I would like to ask the Clerk to call the roll.

The Clerk called the roll and the following Members answered "present":

Mr. Blanchard of Michigan  
Mr. Coyne of Pennsylvania  
Mr. Carr of Michigan  
Mr. DiGuardi of New York  
Mr. Frost of Texas  
Mr. Gingrey of Georgia  
Mr. Goodlatte of Virginia  
Mr. Green of Texas  
Mr. Hertel of Michigan  
Mr. Jones of Oklahoma  
Ms. Kennelly of Connecticut  
Mr. Kolbe of Arizona  
Mr. Konnyu of California  
Mr. Kopetski of Oregon  
Mr. Lancaster of North Carolina  
Ms. Lincoln of Arkansas  
Mr. Matheson of Utah  
Mr. McMillen of Maryland  
Mr. Mica of Florida  
Ms. Morella of Maryland  
Mr. Murphy of Pennsylvania  
Mr. Payne of Virginia  
Mr. Rahall of West Virginia  
Mr. Slattery of Kansas  
Mr. Stearns of Florida  
Mr. Tanner of Tennessee  
Mr. Weldon of Florida

Mr. STEARNS. The Chair announces that 27 former Members of Congress have responded to their names.

Mr. FROST. Thank you all for joining us today. As I prepared for today's report, it brought back many, many

happy memories of my 26 years serving in this august body.

For all of us, service in this remarkable building was the pinnacle of our professional lives, and I know that for each and every one of us there are memories that will forever remind us of the great privilege we enjoyed as a representative of our constituents.

For me, these memories include great friendships with colleagues from both sides of the aisle, working with terrific and talented young people as a part of my staff, and pushing forward pieces of legislation that I know have made a huge, positive difference.

By serving in Congress, we were given the opportunity to serve our country and its citizens. I am very proud that through FMC we can continue, in a small measure, the public service that brought us to Congress in the first place.

My colleagues and I will describe later in this report the many projects through which FMC Members continue to give back.

As you know, every year during our annual meeting we seek to recognize a colleague for her or his exemplary public service before, during and after Congress. This tradition was started in 1974, when we recognized President Gerry Ford with our first Distinguished Service Award and has continued annually since. Other recipients include Tip O'Neill, Bob Michel, Jack Kemp, Tom Foley, and many others.

The award rotates between the parties, and this year a Republican former Member is slated to be recognized.

When our executive committee started considering whom to honor, immediately Connie Morella of Maryland emerged as the clear favorite, and, by unanimous consent, we agreed that she should be our 2019 Distinguished Service honoree.

I now invite Connie to join me here at the dais.

Connie, I have a few remarks, and then you will have the opportunity to say something also.

Connie Morella, former Member of the House of Representatives and former ambassador, exemplifies like few others a commitment to serving her community and her Nation.

Her entire career, since earning her B.A. from Boston University, was focused on public service. Initially, that service was in education as a secondary school teacher in Montgomery County. Though impossible to confirm, I would guess that Montgomery County is the place in America with the highest number of residents able to quote Shakespeare, thanks to her.

She became active in politics based on an issue that defined her political career: women's rights.

Little did she know, when she became involved with the League of Women Voters, that she herself would become a trailblazer, an inspiration, and a mentor to countless women leaders spanning generations.

After serving in the Maryland House of Delegates for 8 years, she ran for