

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION'S BUS INDUSTRY SAFETY COUNCIL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize the American Bus Association (ABA) and its Bus Industry Safety Council or "BISC." This year BISC will be celebrating its 20th anniversary as the only private motorcoach safety organization in North America. In 2000, ABA had the foresight and dedication to establish BISC for the sole purpose of enhancing the safety of commercial passenger-carrying motor vehicle operations. Initially, the group was made up of 30 passionate and dedicated bus industry safety directors but has since grown into a vital network of highway safety advocates, including members of the motorcoach industry, federal and local safety oversight and enforcement officials, research entities, and international organizations. I would like to congratulate ABA and the Bus Industry Safety Council on this auspicious occasion and recognize BISC's 20 years of commitment to improving bus and motorcoach safety.

In response to the horrific events of a bus crash that claimed 23 lives just outside New Orleans on May 10, 1999, Mother's Day, and a year that saw a high-water mark of 32 motorcoach passenger fatalities, ABA supported the formation of BISC. The founding goal of the Council was, and remains today, to continually raise the level of safety in the intercity bus and motorcoach industry through collaborative efforts with industry, government officials, and other safety professionals in a workshop and educational environment. To its credit, BISC has and continues to successfully meet this goal.

Through BISC's education and outreach efforts, onboard motorcoach passenger fatalities have continued to decrease since its establishment, annually providing nearly 600 million passengers with safe transportation. The BISC has played a critical role in assisting the industry to adopt safety technology and practices. Growing from that initial core of 30 founding members, BISC now counts over 400 individuals among its membership, representing every aspect of the motorcoach industry. BISC members provide expertise in areas such as security, mechanical, safety, and operational and maintenance responsibilities, with leadership from across the entire North American motorcoach industry. The group meets regularly to discuss issues and innovations in areas of safety, regulatory compliance, mechanics, technology, and passenger security, to address the transportation safety needs not only of today but for the future of the national transportation system.

I would like to join with ABA and the entire motorcoach industry in saluting this safety or-

ganization. We recognize the many contributions BISC has made to highway safety and the success in bringing the traveling public safely to their destinations. Congratulations to the Bus Industry Safety Council on 20 years of dedication and commitment to bus and motorcoach safety. Keep up the good work, as we look forward to the next 20 years.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first college football game ever played on November 6, 1869, and to recognize the importance of college football in our country today. Since the initial game 150 years ago, more than 5.33 million Americans have played college football and millions more have become devoted fans of the game. Over the past 150 years, college football has become woven into the fabric of our society and the lives of countless Americans.

Many Americans have had the joy and privilege to participate in college football, including many of our nation's greatest leaders—representing all different backgrounds—who often cite their experiences as college football players as critical factors in their development and their long-term success. College football players have become U.S. Presidents, Rhodes Scholars, actors, activists, chief executives of major businesses, successful entrepreneurs, academics and elected officials. The game promotes camaraderie among players which has translated into lifelong friendships for so many and has grown throughout the years with almost 80,000 student-athletes taking to the field every fall.

In North Carolina's First Congressional District, I represent a number of schools across several divisions within the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA): the Duke University Blue Devils, the East Carolina University (ECU) Pirates, the North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Eagles, the Chowan University Hawks, and the Barton College Bulldogs who will field a team in 2020.

College football allows us, as participants and spectators, to put our differences aside and celebrate a game, that in many ways, embodies the spirit of what makes us great as a country—our diversity. It brings together a diverse pool of participants with different backgrounds, experiences, and creeds. On November 6, 2019, we celebrate college football for the stories and memories that it has helped create over these last 150 years.

Madam Speaker, college football is special to so many, and I am honored to recognize such a significant milestone and achievement in the history of this game.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF PRIVATE WILLIAM BLOUNT

HON. ADRIANO ESPAILLAT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life of Private William Blount, a resident of New York's 13th Congressional district who recently passed away. Private Blount grew up in the neighborhoods of Manhattan and proudly answered the call of his country, when he was drafted into the United States Army on February 14, 1968, and was assigned to the HHD 523rd Signal Battalion. Private Blount was deployed to fight in Vietnam for 11 months with his combat tour ending on April 10, 1969.

For his 11-month deployment and combat in Vietnam, Private Blount was awarded the National Defensive Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Parachutist Badge, and for his marksmanship, a Sharpshooter Badge for the M-14 Rifle. While Private Blount was overseas, he was given orders to join another unit. However, record of this order and Private Blount's transfer was lost or unaccounted for in the midst of the Vietnam War. Like many soldiers, Private Blount was designated as "AWOL" for nearly 75 days by the U.S. Army. This inaccurate representation of Private Blount's service, like many other Vietnam War veterans, is an error both President Ford and President Carter recognized, and both submitted Amnesty of Pardons for Vietnam veterans under AWOL or Deserter Status.

Private Blount's record was never cleared and was discharged Under Conditions Other Than Honorable. While this design permitted Private Blount to receive health care services through the VA, he and his family had been prevented from receiving many veterans' benefits while he was alive. It is with great sadness that Private Blount passed away late last month on September 29, 2019, and due to his designation was not permitted to receive a military burial. Private Blount's circumstance is not abnormal from other Vietnam veterans whose discharge from active service on ambiguous grounds and have been denied the benefits and dignity they deserve.

Private Blount's death is a reminder of the sacrifices required to defend our country. But to recognize Private Blount only from his passing is a diminution of his life and career following his active service. Private Blount was an active member of the United States Army Garrison Ft Hamilton's Equal Opportunity Program and has countless volunteer hours logged. He received numerous Garrison Commander's Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service and dedication to the Equal Opportunity Program.

Private Blount's unwavering patriotism, invaluable knowledge of military tactics as a combatant and lifelong student, and ardent representation of combat as a tireless sacrifice

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for his brothers in arms, inspired four of his nephews to enlist in active service as well as his niece, Ret. Sergeant First Class Ramona

Gamble who is a proud 26-year veteran of the U.S. Army.

His story highlights our obligation to honor the veterans who secure the freedoms we all

enjoy. Private Blount will not be forgotten. I thank him for his bravery and dedication to his country. May he rest in peace.