

moves these massive revenues into legitimate banks and off the streets. With access to banking services our businesses can reinvest in communities, increase of transparency of our operations, and help facilitate economic growth. Additionally, SAFE prevents consumers from having to carry cash to pay for their cannabis and allows them to purchase with credit cards. SAFE provides clarity for financial regulators and law enforcement to sort out licensed business from illicit actors.

The bill's lead sponsors Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), Denny Heck (D-WA), Steve Stivers (R-OH) and Warren Davidson (R-OH) have developed broad bipartisan support for this important legislation. The SAFE Act is supported by a sweeping coalition of stakeholders. Activists in the drug policy community, businesses in the cannabis industry, investors, state and local law enforcement, banking regulators, and many other groups.

The SAFE Banking Act is the first step of hopefully many in federal cannabis reforms that allow California and other states with cannabis programs to become fully on par with other existing industries.

Sincerely,

LINDSAY ROBINSON,
Executive Director,
California Cannabis Industry Association.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES,
February 13, 2019.
House Committee on Financial Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN MAXINE WATERS AND RANKING MEMBER MCHENRY: On behalf of Florida's farmers, our medical marijuana professionals, and consumers, I want to thank you for your efforts to provide the cannabis industry access to traditional banking and express my strong support for the Secure and Fair Enforcement Banking Act (H.R. 2215).

Conflicting guidance from the federal government has unnecessarily, led to a higher level of risk and hurdles for businesses in this emerging market. This is an issue that affected me personally—while running for this office, our campaign had two bank accounts closed due to my advocacy for medical marijuana access and cannabis. The absence of traditional banking services forces state-licensed businesses to resort to all cash operations, which is inefficient and a public safety concern. Businesses can't operate proficiently with irregularities restricting their growth, stability, and the ability to pay bills, rent, and employees, when their accounts are inevitably closed. This is an issue impacting our state and national economy.

One of the important provisions of the recently signed 2018 Farm Bill (the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018) is the relisting of hemp as an agricultural commodity. But without congressional action, continued confusion and misinformation regarding hemp could discourage financial institutions from partnering with our farmers on this new commodity.

The Secure and Fair Enforcement Banking Act (H.R. 2215) is a strong first step in providing legitimate cannabis related and state-licensed farmers, business, and consumers with access to an efficient and safe banking system, and traditional loans and capital markets.

Sincerely,

NICOLE FRIED,
Commissioner of Agriculture.

NATIONAL ARMORED CAR ASSOCIATION,
September 25, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs,
Washington, DC.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Minority Leader, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY: On behalf of the National Armored Car Association (NACA), I write to express our support for H.R. 1595, the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act of 2019. While NACA's members do not take a position in favor of or opposed to the legalization of cannabis or marijuana, nor currently service the U.S. cannabis industry, we support H.R. 1595 because it would address the existing conflict between federal and state law with respect to proceeds from marijuana-related businesses and allow for safer transportation, storage and oversight of such proceeds.

Formed in 1929, NACA is a business association that brings together the three major companies of the armored car industry—Brink's, Garda, and Loomis—with a focus on protecting and promoting the common interests of the industry. These three organizations comprise approximately 90% of the armored car industry in the United States, and NACA members have handled virtually every dollar and coin in circulation. They provide secure transportation and cash management services for the Federal Reserve, financial institutions, state and local governments, and private businesses and individuals across the United States and internationally.

Currently thirty-three states and several territories, including the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico, have legalized the use of cannabis to some extent. However, federal law prohibits cultivation, distribution, and possession of marijuana imposing significant legal risks to financial institutions and ancillary businesses that might consider providing financial services to the marijuana industry. Consequently, hundreds of millions of dollars in cash are being transported and stored outside our banking system and often without adequate security and oversight. The lack of available vendors to provide secure transport and storage of cash increases the risk of criminal activity that can pose a danger not only to those involved in the cannabis industry, but the general public. H.R. 1595 would provide NACA member companies with the needed legal protection and clarity to safely and securely transport cash in states that have legalized and regulated cannabis.

We urge members of the House to support H.R. 1595.

Sincerely,

BASIL THOMSON,
Senior Director, NACA.

RECOGNIZING RICHARD KLOSE SENIOR FOR THE 2019 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Richard Klose Senior of Laurel, a recipient of the 2019 Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to his country and leadership in his community.

Mr. Klose is a veteran of the United States Army. He served from 1961 to 1964 in the 3rd Brigade 4th Armored Division and attained the rank of Sergeant.

Serving the community of Laurel for 12 years, Mr. Klose volunteers at the Laurel Senior Center as a board member and a volunteer driver. He has also served on the Yellowstone County Adult Resource Alliance for seven years. For the last five years, Mr. Klose has served as vice president of the Friends of the Yellowstone National Cemetery.

Mr. Klose is a prominent member of the Montana American Legion. He has been the Department of Montana Commander, the District 11 Adjutant, and Laurel's Post No. 123 Commander. Mr. Klose is dedicated to the post's Funeral Honors detail where he has participated in 85 percent of all funerals conducted at the Yellowstone National Cemetery.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Richard Klose Senior for his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL WALTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Mr. WALTZ. Madam Speaker, I mistakenly returned from a meeting in the Rayburn Room too late and missed the second vote of the series.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 613.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Federal Employee Recruitment Act of 2019 to require the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop, within three months of enactment of this bill, a plan for recruiting new workers into federal service. With the aging of the federal workforce, this bill is more important than ever.

The average age of federal employees has steadily increased over the course of the last two decades, hitting 47.5 years in 2017. In the private sector, 54 percent workers are over 40 years old, while in the federal workforce, that number is 69 percent. At the end of last year, only 6 percent of the federal workforce were under 30, while almost a quarter of private-sector employees were under 30.

There are numerous consequences to an aging federal workforce. For example, as older federal employees opt to retire, the government risks permanently losing much of its institutional knowledge if federal agencies cannot find adequate replacements.

Possible solutions to the problem of a graying workforce include increased federal recruitment at college and university campuses, increased technological innovation in how applications are submitted, and a greater number of internships. Improved benefits, including paid family leave, increased telework,

and short-term disability insurance allowing coverage for non-work-related injury or illness or pregnancy, can also likely increase recruitment and retention of employees by the federal government.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

RECOGNIZING ALICE SEFCIK
SULAK

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Madam Speaker, I'm honored to recognize the incredible life and achievements of Alice Sefcik Sulak of Temple, Texas. Her contributions to the region, as well as her commitment to maintaining the proud traditions of her Czech ancestry, have made her a beloved member of the Central Texas community.

Renowned for both her singing voice as well as her abilities to play multiple instruments, Alice was one of Texas' pioneering Czech vocalists who distinguished herself as an accomplished and respected musician with a distinctive and recognizable style. Throughout her life, she both mentored young musicians and helped popularize Czech music throughout Texas.

Alice remains a vital member of the Temple community. In 1923, her parents built Tom Sefcik Hall, a classic Texas dance hall. Alice grew up working at the hall, and in 1970 she took over the operation, which she continues to run today. Sefcik Hall is a community gathering place and the site of countless first dates, weddings, anniversary celebrations, birthday parties, and family reunions. While the number of dance halls across Texas are dwindling, the lights remain on at Sefcik Hall, where new memories are made every day.

Recognizing her invaluable contributions, the City of Temple has proclaimed November 17, 2019 as "Alice Sefcik Sulak Day." She is truly a local treasure and a fitting recipient of our recognition and appreciation. Her commitment to investing her gifts, talents, and abilities to improve her community is a deeply held creed that speaks to the generosity of a true and devoted citizen.

Alice Sefcik Sulak's life is the story of a woman unafraid to chase her passions and devote her time to make good communities great. I join all Temple residents in celebrating her on this special day.

GRAVE CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE
OF JOSE DANIEL FERRER

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Speaker, I am gravely concerned for the welfare of Jose Daniel Ferrer, a courageous Cuban pro-democracy activist and hero of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU).

Ferrer was seized on October 1, 2019, and remains held without access to family, friends, legal counsel, international human rights

groups, or other concerned members of his organization.

Human rights groups including Amnesty International have cited alarming but unverified reports of torture and maltreatment at the hands of the regime's thugs, including the withholding of necessary medical care, food and water.

It is a disgrace that the King and Queen of Spain are in Cuba, while Ferrer languishes in prison, and have failed to exercise simple human decency by demanding his release, or meeting with other courageous independent democracy and human rights activists.

The regime in Cuba has the blood of innocents on its hands, those whose only "crime" was daring to speak against the evils of the dictatorship including:

Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died in state custody on February 23, 2010; Juan Wilfredo Soto Garcia, who died on May 8, 2011;

Laura Pollan, the renowned leader of the Ladies in White, who died under suspicious circumstances on October 14, 2011;

Wilman Willar Mendoza, who died on January 19, 2012;

Armando Sosa Fortuny, who died on October 28, 2019;

We also remember Oswaldo Paya and Harold Cepero of the Christian Liberation Movement, both of whom died on July 22, 2012 in a suspicious car accident that has not been fully and appropriately investigated.

The regime of firing squads, political prisoners, the Tugboat Massacre, the Brothers to the Rescue shootdown, the Black Spring, and the murders of activists continues its evils to this day. It continues to intimidate, detain, encourage acts of repudiation, and inflict brutal violence to suppress the Cuban people.

Jose Daniel Ferrer must be released immediately and without condition, and those who participate in vile human rights abuses must be held accountable. The world is watching. Should any harm come to Ferrer, the murderous Cuban dictatorship headed by Raúl Castro and his puppet Miguel Diaz-Canel bear sole responsibility.

RECOGNIZING MARY LAFORGE
FOR THE 2019 MONTANA CONGRESSIONAL
VETERAN COMMENDATION

HON. GREG GIANFORTE

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Mr. GIANFORTE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mary LaForge of Crow Agency for the Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for her service to her country and service to fellow veterans at Crow Agency.

Ms. LaForge served in the United States Air Force as a reprographic specialist. She received multiple commendation during her time in the Air Force, including the Air Force Overseas Service Ribbon and the Good Conduct Medal.

At the Crow Agency, Ms. LaForge has played a large role in providing many services to her fellow veterans. She coordinated with the Billings Vet Center to ensure mental health services are provided to Crow Agency veterans, assisted others with enrolling in pro-

grams with the Department of Veteran Affairs, and brought veteran employment fairs and job opportunities to the agency. Additionally, she placed a key role in organizing the Yellowstone Homeless Veterans Stand Down.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending Mary LaForge for her dedication and service to her country and community.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF
AUSTIN TICE

SPEECH OF

HON. DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, more than seven years ago, Austin Tice, an American journalist and Marine Corps veteran, disappeared in Syria.

Since the day he vanished, his parents, family, friends, and supporters, have worked tirelessly to ensure that no stone is left unturned and no avenue ignored to see Austin return home safely.

In the seventh year of Austin's captivity, I ask that whomever holds Austin release him immediately so that he can return to his loved ones.

I also ask the assistance of the Government of Syria to do whatever it can to help facilitate Austin's release.

There are things that transcend politics and diplomacy, bridge cultural divides, and need no translation across different languages.

Those are things like love and hope—represented by a mother and father who wake up each day with deep love and concern for their son and the belief that today could be the day when they get the chance to hug him again.

I ask for the help of whomever holds Austin and can assist with his release—without the assignment of blame or malice to anyone—so that this year is the last that Austin remains so far from home and his family.

HONORING ROSA EMILIA
RODRÍGUEZ-VÉLEZ

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the distinguished career of the honorable Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez, on her retirement as U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

The experience and commitment of U.S. Attorney Rodríguez-Vélez has been vital in the Puerto Rico District. Her record in this office is of outstanding performance in the face of the great challenges in the fight against violent crime, drug and arms trafficking, national security threats, human trafficking, organized crime, illegal entry into the U.S., and most notably the fight against public corruption.

U.S. Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez has served the public interest since 1977 in the Puerto Rico Department of Justice and since 1988 in the U.S. Attorney's Office. In that role she held numerous key positions in her career as First Assistant U.S. Attorney,