

While serving our country overseas as a cavalry scout in Operation Desert Storm, Jamie was involved in an accident that left him briefly paralyzed and now disabled, and wrestling with severe depression and PTSD. When he returned home, he would travel to the local VA for treatment where he was issued a cane to use that never held up. So, he decided to make his own out of repurposed Christmas trees.

An effort that started out as a necessity three years ago has now grown to a team of 60 volunteers who have made more than 220 canes. Jamie says crafting these canes is his true calling and they have brought him back from the brink of taking his own life—and he has changed the lives of those around him.

I want to honor Jamie today and thank him on behalf of the 25th District of Texas for his continued service to our nation. In God we trust.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOEL PACKER

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Joel Packer, a true hero for education and a dear friend.

Joel Packer is known across the education community as a champion for education funding. He spent more than 40 years advocating for students both in the public and private sector. Starting at the Student Association of the State University of New York, his career as an advocate grew with his work in D.C. at the National Education Association, and most recently, The Raben Group and the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) before his retirement in 2016.

Joel worked on critical issues like education funding, higher education, environmental hazards in schools, and civil rights. He was on the front lines of the push to improve testing in No Child Left Behind and was always there to remind us who we need to be prioritizing in the Congress: our children and their education. Joel championed the coalition of education advocates at CEF and masterfully represented the interests of a diverse group of educational institutions. Joel led the CEF's fight against education budget cuts in 2015, never giving up on his mission to ensure a genuine federal investment in our children's education. Throughout his career, Joel's dedication demonstrated the kind of intensity and willingness to collaborate necessary to win in the fight for education. Moreover, his passion for education and bettering the lives of all students was clear. Joel was an expert when it came to education policy and the Appropriations process; he knew, and helped all of us learn, how good ideas and good policies are not good enough—not without the necessary resources to make a difference.

I feel lucky to have known such a tremendous advocate for education in this country. Joel was many things—he was an amazing husband, a proud father and grandfather, an inspiring mentor and colleague, and an unwavering friend. Joel was taken from us too suddenly, and my deepest condolences go to his family. We will miss Joel and his bound-

less passion for fighting for what is right and for what our nation's children need most. Joel's values and mission will live on in those of us who remain in the fight, and we fight in his honor.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Joel Packer. He was a true champion for education and his leadership will never be forgotten.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAKU POGROMS: REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of the victims of pogroms against the Armenian population in then-Soviet Azerbaijan thirty years ago: These attacks against Armenian Christians happened between 1988 and 1990 in the cities of Sumgait (February 27 to 29, 1988), Kirovabad (November 21 to 27, 1988) and the city of Baku (January 13 to 29, 1990).

It is clear that the pogrom of Armenians in Baku was not a spontaneous and one-time event, but the culmination of a series of ethnic violence waged against Armenians. In 1988, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave forcibly separated from Armenia and incorporated into Soviet Azerbaijan, began to voice their demand for reunification with Armenia. Their peaceful protests were reinforced by the February 20, 1988 vote by the Soviet of People's Deputies in Karabakh requesting the transfer of the region to Armenia. These events were taking place in the context of Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost. Unfortunately, Moscow and Azerbaijani authorities rejected these calls and strong anti-Armenian sentiment was whipped up, including calls for the death and ouster of the Armenian population.

On February 27, 1988, a massive pogrom was carried out in Sumgait where the Armenian population was brutally slaughtered and expelled. The Sumgait pogrom was followed by a pogrom in Kirovabad, the second largest city in Azerbaijan, where all the Armenians were expelled. After these tragedies, a massive migration of Armenians from Azerbaijan began, along with the migration of approximately 200,000 Azerbaijanis and Muslim Kurds who exited Armenia. By 1989, Armenians remaining in Azerbaijan stayed only in those places where they had well-established communities, as in Baku.

In January 1990, a series of Azerbaijani political rallies took place, and on January 13th, a crowd of about 50,000 divided into groups and began raiding and invading Armenian homes, brutalizing the inhabitants, including women and children, and destroying and burning houses, businesses and other community structures. The rallying cry was to cleanse the city of Armenians. The violence, killings, rapes, beatings, looting and forcible expulsion of Armenians persisted between January 13th and 20th. It is still unknown the exact number of people killed, but estimates place the death toll around 450 people. Throughout it all, local militia and Soviet troops stood by as the violence escalated over a week's time. Not until

the evening of January 20th, after most of the Armenian population had fled or been expelled from Baku, did the Soviet Army intervene to stop the seven-day massacre.

Garry Kasparov was born in Baku in 1963. His mother was Armenian. In 1985, he became the youngest ever World Chess Champion. In January 1990, he was excelling in his competitions, and ranked as the No. 1 chess player in the world. Yet in January 1990, he bravely returned to Baku, into the midst of massacre and carnage, to rescue and evacuate the families of his friends and relatives. Describing those events, he has testified that:

"No one would halt the Armenian pogroms in Baku, although there were eleven thousand soldiers of internal troops in the city. No one would intervene until the ethnic cleansing was carried out. The pogroms were happening not in a random place, but in the huge capital city with blocks of flats. In such a megapolis as Baku, the crowd simply cannot carry out targeted operations like that. When the pogrom-makers go purposefully from one district to another, from one apartment to another, this means that they had been given the addresses and that they had a coordinator."

I don't mean to simplify the complex history and people of this region, but these pogroms set the stage for more than two decades of aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenians, during which Azerbaijan initiated and lost a war against Nagorno Karabakh. Azerbaijan's persecution of Armenians continues even today in attacks against Nagorno-Karabakh, now known as the Republic of Artsakh.

There has yet to be an independent investigation of the events that occurred between 1988 and 1990 that emptied Azerbaijan of its Armenian population. No one has been held accountable for the violence and the deaths. Azerbaijan remains in turmoil because of the fanaticism and thirst to ethnically cleanse the entire region of Armenian Christians.

The U.S. Congress forcefully spoke out during the period of 1988 to 1990 against these massacres and expulsions of Armenians by Azerbaijan. We have rejected the Azeri war against Nagorno Karabakh and stood in solidarity with the Armenian people of Artsakh. We will continue to do so.

Madam Speaker, today I remember all the victims and I honor all the survivors of these terrible acts of ethnic cleansing. May all the people of Armenia and Artsakh live in peace and freedom for which they have sacrificed and suffered so much.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HARLEY ROUDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I missed votes on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 as I was traveling after attending a memorial service in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call Vote No. 57 (On Ordering the Previous Question): YEA; Roll Call Vote No. 58 (On Agreeing to H. Res. 844): YEA; and Roll Call Vote No. 59 (On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 1980, as Amended): YEA.

RECOGNIZING LINDA RENÉ
MATTHEWS ON HER RETIREMENT

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. FUDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a constituent, employee and friend, Linda René Matthews, as she retires from the U.S. House of Representatives, where she has served in the District Office of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio since January of 2009.

In fact, she served me so well while I was Mayor of Warrensville Heights, Ohio, that I knew she would be invaluable as a congressional staffer. I was right.

Linda has been a strong, stable force, who has always understood the needs of constituents and worked hard to be of service to them and me. Her loyalty is unfaltering, her advice always candid, and her care for the integrity of my offices unquestionable.

After more than 20 years with me, Linda has decided to retire effective February 29, 2020. She leaves a legacy that set a standard in so many ways. She is more than the title of Scheduler/Office Manager implies, serving so many years as a member of my team of advisors. So, I say:

Whereas, Linda René Matthews has spent most of her professional life as a public servant; and

Whereas, Ms. Matthews has served the people of Northeast Ohio for over twenty years, first in the Office of the Mayor of Warrensville Heights and now in the District Office of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio; and

Whereas, Ms. Matthews is a life-long resident of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio; and

Whereas, Ms. Matthews has served the constituents of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio with distinction for more than eleven (11) years; and

Whereas, Ms. Matthews is retiring as Scheduler and Office Manager in the District Office of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio;

Resolved, that the 11th Congressional District of Ohio acknowledges, salutes and celebrates its resident and servant leader, Linda René Matthews, this 12th day of February 2020, for her record of excellence in service, and unqualified loyalty to the District's constituents.

CONGRATULATING DR. CHARLENE
M. DUKES ON HER RETIREMENT
AS PRESIDENT OF PRINCE
GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate an outstanding and trailblazing leader in higher education in Maryland's Fifth District. Dr. Charlene M. Dukes will be retiring as President of Prince George's Community College this June after thirteen years at the helm.

She is the first woman to lead the College in its sixty-two-year history.

Dr. Dukes's time as President has been characterized by growth and a deepening of the College's mission. She oversaw a partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools to create the first middle college in our state as well as a new Teacher Academy, Academy for Health Sciences, and two P-Tech Schools. The College joined with the University of Maryland Global Campus to launch a 3D Scholars Program and to expand programs in information technology and math. Under President Dukes's leadership, the College built new buildings at its Largo campus, including Lanham and Bladen Halls, the Culinary Arts Center, the Center for Performing Arts, and the Center for Health Studies. She led the effort to begin a major renovation this year of Marlboro Hall, the College's largest classroom facility.

A proponent of streamlining operations to enhance the quality of its services, Dr. Dukes oversaw a process of realigning the College's organizational structure under the 2019–2021 Strategic Plan. That plan focuses on increasing student success, growing the College's regional impact, and ensuring that the College's organization excels in helping it serve the 40,000 students who benefit annually from its courses and programs.

Before becoming the eighth President of Prince George's Community College, Dr. Dukes served on the Prince George's County Board of Education and as adjunct faculty at the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh. She also taught at Prince George's Community College and at Morgan State University. Former Governor Martin O'Malley appointed her to serve on the State Board of Education from 2007 to 2015, and she was the Board's President for the last three years of that period. Recognized by Washington Magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the metro area in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017, Dr. Dukes was inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame in 2013. She continues to serve on the boards of Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce, the Biden Institute, the Business Roundtable, the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, and Campus Compact, among other nonprofits.

When Dr. Dukes retires at the end of June, she will leave a powerful and lasting legacy for the College and for the county and state she has so faithfully served in the cause of higher education. Because of her leadership, thousands of Maryland students have access to quality, affordable community college that can serve as a pathway to opportunity and success. I join in thanking her for her service, and I congratulate her on her upcoming retirement.

CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION OF THE KIWANIS
CLUB AND THE ZONTA CLUB OF
JOLIET

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Mr. FOSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Centennial Celebration of the Kiwanis Club of Joliet and Zonta International.

Since its formation in 1920, The Kiwanis Club of Joliet has had a strong commitment to our community. They have supported cherished programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Center for Disability Services, the Guardian Angel Community Services, and many more. Currently, they sponsor several high school and middle school community clubs, inspiring our youth to give back as well.

The Zonta Club of Joliet is a service-based organization committed to promoting women both locally and globally. Through fundraisers, they finance scholarships, grants, international projects, and charities. They are also the sponsors of the Joliet Central High School Fearless Females, a club dedicated to empowering young women.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Kiwanis Club of Joliet and Joliet International for 100 years of dedication to our community, and I wish them the best in the years to come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DECREASE
NOISE LEVEL ACT

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of the Decrease Noise Level Act.

For millions of Americans, noise from aircraft is a constant source of torment, whether they live right near an airport or under a regular flight path. Chronic exposure to excessive noise can lead to sleep deprivation, task interruptions, among other negative consequences, which result in untold costs on society in diminished work productivity.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently uses a Day-Night average noise level to assess the level at which noise exposure becomes "significant" in residential communities. However, the level that the FAA has currently deemed acceptable is 65, a full 10 decibels higher than what Europe allows.

FAA's use of 65 DNL as "significant" is based on severe and immediate health impacts, at which point damage has already been done. It is essential that the FAA considers quality of life, long-term health impacts, home values, and overall economic impact. I believe reasonable noise congestion levels should be based on a standard that falls well before the point at which long-term health is impacted.

That is why I am introducing the Decrease Noise Level (DNL) Act—a bill that would require the FAA to immediately lower the level of noise that is considered "significant" to 60, and create a plan to lower it to 55 within 10 years. It would also require community outreach from the FAA to promote its recent study that considers alternatives to the DNL as a metric to measure noise.

I urge my colleagues to join me to pass this important legislation.