

HONORING THE LEGACY OF FRANK LOSONSKY

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the legacy of the last remaining AVG Flying Tiger, Frank Losonsky, who passed away last week at 99 years of age.

Mr. Losonsky was one of 300 men who comprised the American Volunteer Group, which sailed to China in 1941 to defend against the Imperial Japanese in World War II.

Mr. Losonsky was the crew chief of the Hell's Angels Squadron, where he was responsible for maintaining three to four, maybe five, aircraft at a time.

The Flying Tigers were a unique unit because most of their pilots and support personnel were enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marine Corps, but they flew under Chinese colors.

This elite group was devised and commanded by Louisianian and LSU graduate Lieutenant General Claire Chennault. On his recommendation, President Franklin Roosevelt signed an order allowing American regulars to be lent to the Chinese Air Force. They first flew combat 12 days after Pearl Harbor on December 20, 1941.

Mr. Losonsky's legacy lives on at the Chennault Aviation and Military Museum in Monroe, Louisiana, and we are proud to host it.

Please join me in honoring the contributions of Frank Losonsky and the rest of the AVG Flying Tigers to the liberation of the Pacific from Imperial Japan.

STARTING OVER ON THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

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

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, we will soon be voting on H.J. Res. 79, which attempts to remove the deadline for ratification contained in the equal rights amendment, which passed Congress in 1972.

Over the decades, we have made great strides in our Nation in promoting and protecting women's rights. This year, we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote across our country.

A few months ago, I visited the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in Adams, Massachusetts. It is a small but powerful museum that tells the story of Susan B. Anthony and her work, along with other suffragists, for the right to vote and for other rights for women.

When talking about how far we have come in equal rights for women, I can't help but think of my own mother, who is now in her eighties. When I graduated from eighth grade, she fulfilled

her goal of graduating from college, which she had never had a chance to do. When I went off to college, she fulfilled a lifelong dream and went to law school; and, in 1988, she graduated from Georgetown University Law School with her law degree. It took her a long time to finally have these opportunities, but she persevered and succeeded.

So I am thinking about my mother as well as my wife, who is an actuary, and my sister, who is an attorney. I think about them when I work on protecting women from discrimination and harassment in the workplace, when I work for legislation for equal pay for women and for other bills to guarantee equal treatment for women.

The equal rights amendment, as we now consider it, was passed by Congress in 1972. There was a 7-year deadline placed by Congress on States for ratification, just as there had been on a number of other constitutional amendments. At the deadline, three-fourths of States had not ratified it.

This week, Congress will be considering H.J. Res. 79, which retroactively removes the deadline for ratification. There is much controversy over whether this is constitutional. In addition, H.J. Res. 79 also requires a simple majority to pass.

Article V of the Constitution gives Congress the power to propose constitutional amendments but requires a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate. The original resolution introduced in the House this year to remove the ERA deadline, H.J. Res. 38, required a two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate.

In addition, we know that the Senate is highly unlikely to take up this resolution. So, if Congress is interested in the equal rights amendment being added to the Constitution, we should be considering H.J. Res. 35, which would restart the process.

Just a couple of days ago, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a longtime supporter of the ERA, said Congress should do just this. Justice Ginsburg said:

I would like to see a new beginning. I'd like to start over.

She added:

There is too much controversy about latecomers. Plus, a number of States have withdrawn their ratification. So, if you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard States that have said "we've changed our minds"?

H.J. Res. 35, which would restart the process, could go through committee, where it could be debated, potentially amended, and then brought to the floor for further debate and possible amendment. In doing so, we can clear up any points of contention about the impact of the ERA and raise a consensus.

If we truly want to support the addition of the equal rights amendment to the Constitution, this is what we should do. I support doing this. Otherwise, we are simply casting a message vote.

This week when we vote on H.J. Res. 79, my message is yes. I will be voting

"yes" to demonstrate my support for protecting equal rights for my wife, my mother, my sister, and for all women.

HONORING BRANDON RENZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to recognize the departure of a long-term servant of the House, Brandon Renz.

Brandon has served the House of Representatives for nearly two decades and has been a trusted leader of my staff for well over a decade. Most recently, he has worked with me and fellow Members on the Education and Labor Committee as Republican staff director and has provided trustworthy counsel and excellent organizational prowess.

He also served as my chief of staff during my time in leadership as House Republican Secretary and was a respected liaison for me and other Members, staff, and House offices over my eventful time in that office.

While Brandon has been a tremendous asset and key contributor in all those significant positions, he did some of his best work in the same trenches that many of our staff do, in positions and in rooms that do not receive attention from C-SPAN or grab headlines.

Brandon started as a staff assistant for a Member from his home State of Iowa, Representative STEVE KING, reluctantly coming to Washington on the recommendation of a friend and only after committing to himself that he would stay only 1 year.

In less than 3 years on Capitol Hill, Brandon earned a reputation as an astute legislative mind with bedrock conservative principles and became my legislative director. In him, I found a partner who shared my commitment to accurate, grammatically correct documents of all types.

He labored with me on constituent letters and on many important legislative projects, including providing the Puerto Rican people with an opportunity to express all their preferences when considering their territory's future, developing legislation to lessen unfunded mandates, and expressing Congress' disapproval of the bailout funds expended on the TARP program.

He also worked as a rules associate with the House Rules Committee, sitting through interminable hearings at all hours of the day and night. He did important work there, ensuring Members' voices were heard and that the House could work its will on legislation considered on the House floor.

After several years guiding my legislative staff and agenda, he accepted my request to serve as chief of staff and used his terrific skills to benefit constituents and ensure my offices paid back the trust given to them by America's taxpayers.