

The people most impacted by disasters and emergencies are often the most vulnerable members of our society: the elderly, the economically disadvantaged, and those with disabilities. All Americans deserve nothing less than the full-throated support of their federal government as they prepare for natural disasters and deal with public health emergencies, and that is exactly what my legislation would ensure.

As a member of California's Congressional delegation, I have seen firsthand the devastation that disasters can have on communities. In 2017 and 2018, our state experienced the most destructive fires recorded in California history. The federal government must be a real partner for states as they prepare for these disasters and seek to make our communities more resilient. My district is also one of the most flood-prone in the entire nation, and Travis Air Force Base housed the first American evacuees from the coronavirus outbreak in East Asia.

That is why the "FEMA Disaster Preparedness Improvement Act" would increase the federal cost share under the Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management Performance Grant Programs to 85 percent, from 75 percent and 50 percent respectively. FEMA's Emergency Performance Grant Program helps state and local officials manage public emergencies including health crises, such as the recent coronavirus outbreak.

My bill would also exempt environmental reviews under federal or state law from the 36-month deadline to complete hazard mitigation projects and make designated "special flood hazard areas" under the National Flood Insurance Program automatically eligible for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants. Lastly, the bill would direct the Government Accountability Office to report to Congress on the challenges faced by states in utilizing FEMA's Public Assistance Program Alternative Procedures.

Damaged caused by natural disasters in the United States has risen in recent years, with an average of 15 disasters with a cost of over a billion dollars between 2016 and 2018, more than double the average of the previous three decades. Congress must respond to this troubling trend and better support vulnerable communities across the country as they prepare and increase resilience to natural disasters and other public emergencies.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to co-sponsor the "FEMA Disaster Preparedness Improvement Act." As a senior member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I plan to make this critical legislation a major priority.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN  
NIEDERMAN

**HON. JIM BANKS**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2020*

Mr. BANKS. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life and career of John Niederman. Since 1985, John has poured his heart and soul into the outstanding work conducted by Pathfinder Services.

Though born in New York, Indiana is proud to claim John as one of our own. A graduate of Fort Wayne's own University of Saint

Francis, he has spent over three decades working in Huntington with Pathfinder Services to help those who need it most.

John embodies the purest form of Hoosier hospitality in his work, helping countless others on their way to realizing greater economic, physical and developmental independence. He has been active in creating an environment that values inclusion and fairness, giving those whom he encounters the best chance possible to succeed and Jive out the American Dream.

As John prepares to step down from a position he has loved and excelled at, I have no doubt that he will continue to be a leader in his community and a shining example to those who seek him out. Huntington County, and all of Indiana, are blessed to continue to count John and his family as their own.

JUDGE PERRY LITTLE—BLACK  
HISTORY MONTH

**HON. KATHY CASTOR**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2020*

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a jurist who has served our Tampa neighbors for decades—and continues his dedication to this day. Through his work spanning more than 40 years and as the second African American appointed to the bench in Hillsborough County, which is the longest tenure for an African American judge in the county's history, Judge Perry A. Little has helped shape our community forever. Judge Little is husband to Sonjia Latson Little and father of three: Matthew (Nandie), Marissa and Josie. He is also the proud grandfather of four girls, Reigan, Ivy, Gabrielle and Eden, and a member of Beulah Baptist Church.

Judge Little was born and educated in Georgia. He received his undergraduate degree from Morehouse College and his law degree from Emory University. After completing law school, he took a position at a legal clinic where he could have a larger community impact over a federal position he was offered in Washington, D.C.

At a time when windows and doors were just beginning to open for African Americans in the legal profession, Judge Little was appointed to the bench in Hillsborough County in 1977 by Governor Rubin Askew, where he presided for more than 12 years. He was the second African American in the county's history to be appointed, standing on the shoulders of Judge George Edgecomb, who only served three years as a county judge due to illness, but set the highest of standards for his colleagues to follow. The 1970s were a transformative time for communities as desegregation orders blanketed the nation while raising the profile of diversity at all levels of government. With the vital role our courts play in our democracy, economy and daily lives, a more diverse judiciary brings greater confidence in our justice system and is an important step toward a more just and equal America. In 1993, Governor Lawton Chiles appointed Judge Little to the Circuit Court where he served in the Juvenile and Circuit Civil Divisions until his retirement in 2007.

Much of Judge Little's Circuit experience was dedicated to positively impacting the lives of juveniles and young adults through his legal

decisions, who he continues to serve as an inspiration. Judge Little retired to care for his aging father in Georgia but continues to lend his judicial expertise as a Senior Judge for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, and assists other judges to ensure each case is given the time and care it deserves. He has been recognized for his extensive commitment to service through various awards, including the 2018 Distinguished Leadership Award from the Black Law Students Association at WMU-Cooley Law School's Tampa Bay campus.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Tampa Bay community, it gives me immense pride to honor a great public servant this Black History Month. Judge Little is a man faithful to his family and community, and is unparalleled in service to his neighbors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. DAVID SCHWEIKERT**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2020*

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, due to travel complications, I was unable to be present for votes on Monday, March 2.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 79, H.R. 5003 and YEA on Roll Call No. 80, H.R. 5932.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. WILL HURD**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2020*

Mr. HURD of Texas. Madam Speaker, due to travel delays, I was unable to participate in the following votes: Roll Call No. 79, 80, 81, and 82. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 79; YEA on Roll Call No. 80; YEA on Roll Call No. 81; and YEA on Roll Call No. 82.

HONORING SENIOR MASTER  
SERGEANT DIANA M. CAREY

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 4, 2020*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable community servant, Senior Master Sergeant Diana M. Carey.

Sergeant Carey attended Jackson State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary and special education. She also earned a Masters in English to teach secondary level education.

Sergeant Carey retired from the United States Air Force with twenty years of service. She actively served in Texas, Japan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. In addition, she has held administrative, contracting and intelligence positions within the United States Air Force. Sergeant Carey also supported the Military Airlift Command in deployments.

Since July of 1997, she has served as the Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training