

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN MEMORY OF AARON SHEPLEY

HON. SEAN CASTEN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. CASTEN of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Aaron Shepley. The State of Illinois has lost one of its most capable and dedicated public servants with the tragic death of Crystal Lake's longtime Mayor. In his long service to the community, as both mayor and city council member, a founding member of the drumline group the Crystal Lake Strikers, and dedicated husband and father, Aaron led with quiet humility, approachability, and selflessness.

A resident of Crystal Lake since 1972, Aaron was passionate and unwavering in his advocacy for the city, and eager to work in a vociferous and positive manner to assist its residents. In a time when politics more often divides us, Aaron was most professionally proud of the congenial relationships among his fellow council members and the work of the Crystal Lake city staff. He leaves a beautiful legacy of highly competent and unselfish public service that should inspire us all.

In addition to his civic work, Aaron was also a drummer dedicated to supporting aspiring musicians. After learning to play drums for his 40th birthday, Aaron and two friends started Strikers, a drum line for adult percussionists. In the decade since their founding, the Strikers have gained local and national notoriety, and created several educational programs to support the performing arts in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. Aaron was the driving force behind the Strikers' Evening of Percussion fundraising event, and in the 11 years of awarding scholarships, the Strikers have provided over \$50,000 to local students.

Aaron Shepley was a class act, and I am grateful to have known and learned from him. I extend my deepest sympathy to Aaron's wife Regan and their daughters Chase and Madison, and the people of Crystal Lake, for this tremendous loss.

TRIBUTE TO ROMEO WATKINS

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a faithful, civic-minded man and a dear friend, Romeo Watkins, the father of my long-time Chief of Staff Yelberton Watkins, transitioned from this life on April 30, 2020. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Romeo Watkins was a native of the Ridgewood community of Columbia, South Carolina. He was the third of eight children born to the late Deacon Leroy and Beatrice Harris Watkins. His was a close-knit family, with his ma-

ternal grandmother, Agnes Harris, living next door. She took Romeo and his siblings to her hometown of Bronson, Florida every summer, and played an important role in his upbringing. His maternal aunt, Mrs. Franklin Scott Harris, was very close to her nephew, and he spent many nights in her home across from the Governor's Mansion.

Romeo attended Ridgeway Elementary School and Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia. At a young age, he learned the value of hard work. In the mid-1960s, he became a civilian employee at the Fort Jackson U.S. Army training base and continued to work there until his retirement in 1993.

He began barbering as a 10-year old, practicing on his older brother Charles, and later owned and operated a barber shop on North Main Street in Columbia for over 40 years. Ever the entrepreneur, he was also a successful real estate agent. Known for his impeccable taste and style, he was always well dressed.

Those fortunate to know Mr. Watkins knew of his deep Christian faith. He was a life-long member of Ridgewood Baptist Church, joining as a child. A third-generation member, he served for many years on the Church History Committee and was regarded as a historian of the Ridgewood community. While he served in many capacities, his greatest joy at church was his long tenure as Leader of the Jubilee Choir, a role which his father held before him. He was well known throughout the city for his expert knowledge of shape-note singing of common meter hymns.

Mr. Watkins was also an avid golfer. It was on the golf course that we first met many years ago, and we bonded over our love of the sport. He learned to golf as a young caddy on Columbia's segregated golf courses, and he enjoyed playing in golf tournaments across Columbia and throughout the state. He was an annual attendee of my Rudolph Canzater Memorial Classic held each year in Santee, South Carolina, and he also served as a Commissioner of the Eau Claire Youth Baseball League.

Family was always at the center of his life. Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 58 years, Annette Caughman Watkins, and their four children: Quintus (Verdell) Young, Brigitte Watkins Long, Yelberton Romeo Watkins; and Vancito Ethridge Watkins; nine grandchildren: Quintus, Justin, Velicia, Gabrielle, Danielle, Autumn, Alexi, Tori, and Ashlyn; three great-grandchildren: Jamari, Raleigh, and Solomon; and a host of relatives, nieces, nephews, MeadowLake neighbors, and close friends.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Romeo Watkins. He was a man grounded in faith and family, and no one can leave a greater legacy.

CONGRATULATING DALLAS KRUEGER FOR HIS WIN AT CLASS 1A STATE FINALS FOR WRESTLING AT THE IHSA STATE TOURNAMENT

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dallas Krueger, a senior from Rockridge High School, who won the Illinois High School Association's Class 1A State Finals Wrestling Tournament in the 138 pound weigh class.

At 138 pounds, Dallas pinned his opponent in four minutes and forty seconds to finish 47-0. As a former athlete, I appreciate the fortitude Dallas displayed to achieve his dream of being a state champion and commend him for his efforts and attitude. Dallas is an example of the importance of dedication and a strong work ethic, and I am proud to see him represent Taylor Ridge so well throughout the state with his talent and passion.

It is because of student leaders such as Dallas Krueger that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Dallas Krueger on his Class 1A State Finals title in Wrestling.

IN HONOR OF CHERISHED PUBLIC SERVANT, LETTER CARRIER MS. ANGELA SUMMERS—USPS

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a cherished public servant of the United States Postal Service (USPS), Ms. Angela Summers.

Tragically, my congressional district, the 7th District of Indiana, recently lost Ms. Angela Summers, a Letter Carrier with the USPS, to gun violence while she was performing her duties on April 28, 2020. Angela joined the Postal Service almost two years ago, and she quickly became a prized employee. Her friends remember her as "fun-loving and bubbly." Her colleagues remember her as a public servant dedicated to customers. In turn her customers remember her not only as their Letter Carrier—but also as their friend, neighbor, and member of the community.

Postal workers are quite often the human face of government in our communities. They walk door-to-door in our neighborhoods, no matter the weather, earning the trust and confidence of our citizens, just as our neighbors earn our trust. Their deliveries not only mean that a highly anticipated package has arrived at your doorstep. Their work also serves as a subtle reminder that the government, composed of vast institutions, can still reach deep

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

into our communities to build trust on a human level and perform the work that must be done. The Postal Service—and its dedicated employees—are a testament to the work and value of government.

Each day, thousands of federal employees go out in our communities to work and live a life of service, sometimes facing very real, yet underappreciated risks to their lives. Their hard work and dedication often go unnoticed even though both are indispensable for our country, especially now during the current Covid-19 pandemic. I believe that we must recognize this great, indispensable work and commemorate the lives of America's public servants when the moment arises. And we must recognize those risks and the sacrifices made by our public servants to overcome them.

Today, I ask that my colleagues join me in commemorating the life of Ms. Angela Summers, and recognizing the United States Postal Service and the hard work of Letter Carriers in Indianapolis and across the country. Without the service and sacrifice of people like Ms. Summers, the ability of government to carry out critical services would stall and fail. I hope my colleagues will join me and extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Ms. Summers, and to express our most sincere gratitude for her service.

AMERICA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP
DURING COVID-19

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, now, more than ever, America must remain a global leader. We cannot afford to ignore what is happening outside our borders.

As we have learned from the Ebola and Zika crises before, and now the new coronavirus pandemic; infectious disease respects no borders and it has no political ideology.

No matter how successful we are in combating COVID-19 here at home, we will never neutralize the pandemic's threat unless we also fight it abroad.

As Congress continues to address the urgent domestic health and economic crisis, we also must maintain our nation's commitment to providing emergency resources to confront COVID-19 around the world. Such assistance must address both the immediate health crisis and the long-term effects of this pandemic.

Furthermore, the spread of the novel coronavirus has the potential to undo decades of American investments in democracy, health, education, agriculture, and security around the world. Only a robust, comprehensive response from the United States can ensure these investments are not lost and can prevent the exacerbation of second-order intractable social, economic, and political crises in communities ravaged by COVID-19.

As chairman of the House Democracy Partnership (HDP), a bipartisan congressional commission that works to strengthen parliaments in emerging democracies, I have seen first-hand the success of U.S. development assistance programming on the ground. We cannot and should not abandon these

hard-fought development gains or withdraw our leadership and leave our partners in the lurch at this critical time. HDP is organizing virtual round tables with our parliamentary colleagues, starting with Tunisia and Kosovo, to keep up the dialogue and show support.

Combating COVID-19 requires a bold, complex, and comprehensive response that must include coordination with and support for allies, partners, and developing countries, as well as multilateral international institutions, such as the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO is at the forefront of conducting vaccine research, distributing resources, and sharing best practices with governments around the world. Whatever criticisms we may have, this is not the time to cut funding to the very organization that may have the largest global impact on combating COVID-19.

The United States has a proud history of global leadership that is rooted in our country's founding purpose and in our strategic interests.

We must build on that legacy and join with our partners at home and abroad to respond to this pandemic. The stakes could hardly be higher.

RECOGNIZING THE YUMA COUNTY
FARM BUREAU'S CENTENNIAL

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, the Yuma County Farm Bureau is celebrating its centennial this year. An article in the Yuma Morning Sun dated January 8, 1920 notified farmers of the upper valley of a meeting at the courthouse to form and organize a farm bureau. The article goes on to say, "It seems that at last the farmers have come to the conclusion that united they stand and divided they fall." A century later, Yuma County Farm Bureau members remain united in their efforts to protect and promote farming and agriculture locally and beyond.

From its beginnings, the Farm Bureau has existed to give members the tools needed for success. That can mean financial expertise, communication skills, advocacy opportunities, training and opportunities to network with and learn from fellow farmers. It all comes together to help farmers stay strong and prosperous.

Yuma County Farm Bureau leaders work with elected officials and government agencies at the county, state, and national level to advocate on behalf of its members to address issues ranging from food safety, air quality, and water. These efforts help ensure agriculture remains a strong and viable industry. In Yuma County, agriculture is the single largest private sector contributor to Yuma County's gross domestic product.

Yuma County Farm Bureau members are also members of the Arizona Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation. This means that the Farm Bureau today is county, state, and national in its scope and influence and provides members with a voice at all levels.

I look forward to Yuma County Farm Bureau's continued work and success as a voice for farmers ensuring a prosperous future for farming.

RECOGNIZING SARAH McWHIRTER FOR BEING NAMED "DEPUTY OF THE YEAR" FOR HER HEROIC ACTIONS TO SAVE A CITIZEN OF ROCKFORD

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Deputy Sarah McWhirter for being named "Deputy of the Year" by the Illinois Sheriff's Association for her heroic actions during an incident in 2018.

Deputy McWhirter is a four-year veteran of the Winnebago County Sheriffs Police and currently serves in the Sheriffs Crime Scene Unit. In August of 2018, Deputy McWhirter went above and beyond the call of duty to save both herself and a citizen from an armed robbery. The robber approached her car and got several shots off, but she pulled her weapon, defended herself, and saved the citizen. I want to thank Deputy McWhirter for her courageous actions during a life-threatening incident and for saving another person's life. Deputy McWhirter is a hero and I commend her actions to protect and save innocent lives.

It is because of leaders such as Deputy McWhirter that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate Deputy Sarah McWhirter for being named "Deputy of the Year" by the Illinois Sheriff's Association and recognize her for her heroic actions at a citizen's time of need.

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF SHELLY
KNAPP

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Shelly Knapp for her years of service to our nation. Her spouse, Colonel Lewis Knapp, is retiring on July 1, 2020 after 26 years of service and Mrs. Knapp's extraordinary service to the Army, Army Reserve, Army Families, Veterans and her community total over 4,500 hours of volunteer service.

From 2015 to 2020 Mrs. Knapp served as the Senior Volunteer Advisor for the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Instructor/Facilitator, and Army Reserve Minuteman ROTC Scholarship Program Coordinator for the 63d Readiness Division, a two-star level Army Reserve Command located in Mountain View, California. She also volunteered in multiple capacities at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Palo Alto, California. In these capacities she volunteered over 1,500 hours as documented in the Army's Volunteer Management Information System.

In her SVA capacity Shelly Knapp advised the 63d RD Commanding General on all Family Program activities. She trained and mentored Family Readiness Group leaders across the command, scheduling and conducting Family Readiness training, organizing and assisting with Family Days for the 63d RD Headquarters and subordinate units. This represents 390 hours volunteered.

Shelly Knapp served as a YRRP Instructor/Facilitator and Army Family Advisory Panel Member where she trained and facilitated courses and seminars, and mentored Army Reserve Soldiers and family members at numerous YRRP events that occurred before, during and after mobilization. This service represents 429 volunteer hours.

Shelly Knapp stepped up to coordinate the 63d RD's Army Reserve Minuteman ROTC Scholarship efforts for deserving USAR Soldiers and high school recipients on behalf of the 63d RD CG. Five candidates were awarded four-year or three-year Army ROTC scholarships. This service represents 236 volunteer hours.

While at the 63d Readiness Division, Mrs. Knapp was selected by Army Reserve Family Programs to attend and obtain certification as a Department of Defense Master Trainer—one of the select few chosen in the Army Reserve. This represents 296 volunteer hours.

Mrs. Knapp is currently employed as a Budget Analyst at the Veterans Administration Palo Alto Cooperative Studies Medical Research Program in Mountain View, California.

During her time at the VA she volunteered as an artist/vocalist in the VA Palo Alto Arts Session Band, performing at ten VA-sponsored events and recording an original song, 'America Begins', by a fellow VA Arts Band Veteran that won the Bay Area VA Creative Arts Competition. She also volunteers as a Wellness Ambassador and Employee Engagement Committee Leader where she has led efforts for a Wellness Fair attended by over 100 VA employees from multiple Bay Area VA campuses. She also displayed many of her own paintings and drawings for the Women Veteran in Arts Program. This represents 203 volunteer hours.

During the five year period from 2015 to 2020 while Mrs. Knapp was associated with the 63d RD, she volunteered over 1,500 hours while maintaining full-time employment at the VA. She also graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Golden Gate University during this period, completing 65 credit hours in 22 months—a long-time goal accomplished after attending five universities previously due to 20-plus military relocations and multiple deployments during her spouse's military career.

In 2014, prior to her family's final military assignment to the 63d RD, Mrs. Knapp served in a part-time paid position as Program Administrator for Texas A&M University's 4-H 'Operation Military Kids' program where she managed a federal grant that directly assisted Guard and Reserve Families of all service branches at two military installations in Texas. Her efforts included coordinating community partner efforts at family readiness events, organizing multiple volunteer opportunities for military families, conducting cooking classes for military children and families, and briefing community officials on the challenges military families face.

In previous roles as FRG Leader, Co-Leader and Treasurer over a period of 20 years, she accumulated over 3,000 volunteer hours and was instrumental in standing up Family Readiness Groups, training new volunteers, organizing and executing small and large-scale events and managing non-appropriated funds, demonstrating her adeptness at mentoring new volunteers and FRGs and re-energizing dormant ones. She has opened her

home for years to military families for Thanksgiving and she and her family have long been active in Army and Army Reserve Family Programs, including her daughter Katie serving two terms on the National Army Reserve Teen Panel. Her volunteer service to Soldiers and Army Reserve Families culminated in 2012 with her FRG being awarded the DoD Family Readiness Group of the Year—Army Reserve while she served as Co-Leader of the 79th Theater Sustainment Command FRG.

Mrs. Knapp's unmatched energy, excellent communication skills and devotion to serve and assist Army Soldiers, Families and Veterans has contributed greatly to individual, unit and family morale and readiness in every formation and location she has served over 26 years, including assignments in five states and three overseas locations. Her service in the Marines for four years on active duty (1989 to 93) laid the foundation for her volunteer service.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring and thanking Shelly Knapp, a force for good in military families, for her extraordinary service to our country. She has set the 'gold standard' with her thousands of volunteer hours, touched thousands of lives and strengthened our country immeasurably with her devotion to service.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF BONITA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. JOSH HARDER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. HARDER of California. Madam Speaker, today, I am proud to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of Bonita Elementary School in Crows Landing, California. This campus and its educators have continued to provide amazing opportunities to students here in the Central Valley and should be applauded for the valuable work they have provided to our community over that past 150 years.

Bonita Elementary School is one of six traditional schools in the Newman Crows Landing Unified School District. While it is the oldest campus in the district, it is also the smallest of four elementary schools creating a tight knit community where parents and teachers can work together to provide a quality education for their students. The continued achievements of this campus should be credited to the teachers, administrators, and staff who are dedicated to ensuring the academic success of every student and to provide a safe and comprehensive educational experience.

I am honored to recognize the hard work and dedication of everyone who has contributed to the success of Bonita Elementary School over the past 150 years. I know we can look forward to more success for this campus and their students for years to come.

EMERGENCY EDUCATIONAL CONNECTIONS ACT, H.R. 6563

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. MENG. Madam Speaker, I rise in the midst of a global health emergency that has re-calibrated each of our lives, including for over 55 million students across the country who are now forced into remote learning. To help combat the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), over 124,000 public and private schools have closed across the country—many for the remainder of the academic year. These actions have laid bare to the American people the critical role internet access plays in our society.

Before the pandemic struck, there were nearly 12 million students who were part of the so-called "homework gap"—meaning they lacked internet access at home to complete their homework. This is a problem because as many as 7 in 10 teachers assign homework that requires internet access. To keep up with their connected peers, homework gap students had to travel to a library or other public places to use its free Wi-Fi—or risk not completing their homework and falling further behind academically.

Fast forward to now, with millions of people sheltering at home, students are participating in remote learning that includes class meetings, explanations of new content, virtual field trips, homework, and learning exercises. As such, for those students without internet, this gap seems more like a chasm. Students without internet service will fall further behind as students with internet service at home can continue advancing in their studies. Whether they live in urban centers, suburbs, or exurbs, or small communities in rural America, all students require internet connectivity to succeed during this pandemic.

That is why I introduced the Emergency Educational Connections Act, H.R. 6563 which would provide \$2 billion to the FCC's E-Rate program to ensure students can continue their studies from the safety and comfort of their homes. Through this program, the FCC can distribute funds to schools and libraries, including Tribal schools and libraries, relatively quickly. We do not have to reinvent any processes to help students.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that the Emergency Educational Connections Act, H.R. 6563 be included in the next coronavirus relief package to ensure no child loses out on an education because they lack internet access at home. I urge all my colleagues to support it and see it signed into law. We must finally see an end to the digital divide.

RECOGNIZING BLAUM BROS. DISTILLERY FOR CHANGING THEIR PRODUCTION TO HAND SANITIZER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Matt and Mike Blaum for transforming

their liquor distillery during the COVID-19 pandemic to make hand sanitizer, to be distributed at no cost to the community. These Hometown Heroes are being recognized for utilizing their business to contribute to those in need during these trying times.

Blaum Bros. Distillery was founded in 2013 by Matt and Mike with the hope of distilling beverages they could enjoy together. Since March 2020, they have pivoted their purpose to make hand sanitizer and even have a button on their website for hand sanitizer requests. I commend them for taking action during a pandemic, when supplies are in short supply. I thank them for their kindness and generosity to the Moline community.

It is because of leaders such as Matt and Mike Blaum that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Blaum Brothers and their Distillery for their kindness and generosity.

ONGOING PARLIAMENTARY
DIPLOMACY IN EUROPE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. HUDSON. Madam Speaker, I wish to provide an update to my colleagues on the continuing activities of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—the OSCE PA—during these challenging times.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic challenges the OSCE PA to find new ways to conduct its work. International relations require engagement on both a bilateral level and on multilateral levels as well. It is likely that all gatherings of the OSCE PA this year will be online, through video conferences.

For example, last week the OSCE PA held a webinar on economic security and the COVID-19 pandemic. I participated in the event and spoke specifically on energy security needs, pointing to the continuation of Russia's predatory natural gas supply practices which seek to exert geopolitical influence. Europe needs a diversified supply for its energy sources. Too much reliance on Russia for energy can lead to market distortions and encourage corrupt practices, while alternative sources increase security and benefit the average consumer.

Last week a video session was held of those parliamentarians who comprise the leadership of the OSCE PA, which includes Senator ROGER WICKER of Mississippi and myself. Guest speakers included the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, as well as the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarcic of Slovenia. As Chairman of the First Committee, I made clear that the committee will not waver from its crucial role in defending Helsinki Principles where they are most threatened. In this regard, I noted the public statement I made last week, jointly with my fellow committee officers from the parliaments of Romania and Lithuania, on the third anniversary of the tragic death of Joseph Stone, an American working on the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine.

Senator BEN CARDIN of Maryland spoke at this leadership session as the Assembly's

Special Representative on anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance. He noted that disadvantaged immigrant and minority communities are made even more vulnerable by the pandemic, and that parliamentarians have an important role in responding to this problem during states of emergency. Our colleague from New Jersey, Mr. CHRIS SMITH, also spoke in his capacity as the Special Representative of the OSCE PA on Human Trafficking Issues. He stressed how current circumstances make those vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, including children, even more vulnerable. Coronavirus and its butterfly effect have also rendered non-government organizations less effective in their mission to help trafficking victims by operating shelters, care and counseling.

To conclude Madam Speaker, I want to stress that, while we may need to focus our efforts on fighting this pandemic at home, we need to work with our partners abroad to eliminate a virus that knows no borders and from which we ultimately can never fully isolate ourselves. Working with our partners and allies across the globe is the interest of our constituents here at home. I also want to stress that the pandemic has not resolved earlier challenges but in many cases made them worse. We need the capacity to address a wide range of ongoing issues, and the OSCE PA is a valued venue for doing that on a multilateral level.

Madam Speaker, please join me today in recognizing the importance of these continued discussions with our European allies and friends.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor every teacher, administrator, employee and contractor in all San Mateo County school districts who together prepare our children to grow into educated and contributing members of our society. May is National Teacher Appreciation Month, but they deserve our gratitude and admiration every day. They rise to the occasion even under the most challenging and unprecedented conditions they are facing in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Working in education is more than a job, it's a passion. The dedication to guide and nurture our future generations is based on selflessness and wanting to create a better world. The impact an educator has on children is profound. The philosopher Plato once said: "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life"—wise and true words.

Who doesn't have memories of a teacher whose words and actions will stay with them for the rest of their lives? My middle school teacher at South San Francisco's Parkway, Mr. Jex, called me "chief" when he appointed me editor in chief of the school newspaper. Mr. Jex gave me confidence and a purpose. He helped determine the direction of my life . . . like all teachers do.

Educators spend countless hours and their own money to prepare students for the future.

They buy pencils, crayons, paper, snacks, toothbrushes, whatever it is the child is lacking. In the United States, we don't pay them anywhere near their value. They deserve more compensation and more recognition for the tireless and essential work they do, but it's not in the nature of teachers to give up and walk away, not even in the face of COVID-19.

The outbreak of the contagious novel coronavirus forced school and health officers to close schools on March 16th to prevent the spread of the disease. It did not shutter education, though. San Mateo County teachers, administrators, kitchen workers and custodians rose to the occasion. They created distance learning, providing students with Chromebooks and hotspots to connect in virtual classrooms. They designed innovative curricula to ensure engaging learning opportunities. Understanding the dependence of many students on breakfast and lunch, they continued to prepare and distribute meals. Striving to prevent the achievement gap from deepening, they provided additional support, tutoring and counseling for students and their families.

Facing unprecedented challenges, everyone from superintendents to principals to teachers to administrators to custodians came together and contributed. Now, everyone continues to adjust to the new reality. Schools will remain closed for the remainder of the academic year.

Madam Speaker, let us rise to acknowledge the remarkable resilience of our educators and to redouble our efforts as Members of Congress and as members of society to support them. They have our children's backs, so we must have theirs. To invoke Plato again, he said: "No man should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the end of their nature and education."

THANKING THE PEORIA MEDICAL
SOCIETY ALLIANCE FOR 80
YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEORIA
COMMUNITY

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Peoria Medical Society Alliance (PMSA) for its 80 years of service to the Peoria community. The PMSA is a not-for-profit organization that works with the Peoria Medical Society to promote the health, the education, and the quality of life for the people of the Peoria community.

Partnered with the Peoria Medical Society, the PMSA has several committees dedicated to important causes in the community. For example, in their Adopt-A-School program they adopted Whittier Grade School to tutor kindergartners and first graders. They also host game nights and parties for senior homes, such as Heddington Oaks. PMSA even provides scholarships for students attending college in health-related fields. I commend the PMSA for its contributions to the local Peoria community and I thank them for their kindness and generosity.

It is because of leaders such as the PMSA that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally recognize the Peoria Medical Society Alliance for its great work in the Peoria community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ECO-TOURISM VESSEL EQUITY AND RELIEF ACT OF 2020

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the "Eco-tourism Vessel Equity and Relief Act of 2020." This is a bill to address and correct a regulatory mismatch of the manner in which a small passenger vessel that operates in Southeast Alaska is measured. Specifically, the M/V *Liseron* (United States official number 971339), a converted minesweeper that conducts overnight passenger cruises in the eco-tourism trade in Southeast Alaska, should be classified as the same regulatory tonnage for licensing its crew as is used for its safety inspection category, and the other vessels in the same trade.

By way of background, the motor vessel *Liseron* was built in a U.S. shipyard in Tacoma, WA, in the early 1950's as one of a class of seven minesweepers under the auspices of the U.S. Navy for the French but was subsequently reacquired by the Navy in 1955. It was constructed to navigate shallow waters of bays, coastlines, and inlets having a shallow draft, which is why it makes for the perfect vessel to operate in Southeast Alaska. Specifically, the M/V *Liseron* is 145 feet long and 28 feet wide with a draft of 8.5 feet. Later delisted by the Navy, The Boat Company in Port Orchard, WA, acquired and restored the vessel in the late 1980's. After an extensive 16-month restoration in a U.S. shipyard facility in Tarpon Springs, FL, where the vessel was gutted and refitted, this vessel was placed into service in the early 1990's as an eco-tourism vessel in Southeast Alaska. The vessel's operations have a significant economic impact in both Washington State and Alaska. The vessel is homeported in Kitsap County, Washington State, where it undergoes needed maintenance and repair locally in Pacific Northwest shipyards, and where the vessel re-provisions for the next season's sailing in Alaska. Its operations during the cruising season in Southeast Alaska bring significant job opportunities and needed economic activity in local businesses by the company and its customers. The vessel enables tourists from around the world to come and enjoy the unparalleled scenic and natural beauty that Alaska has to offer.

Operationally, the M/V *Liseron* has ten staterooms and is limited to 20 passengers. More critically, the vessel is currently inspected by the Coast Guard as a small passenger vessel in the 100 gross regulatory tonnage category. Notwithstanding that, the vessel has a larger tonnage entered on its certificate of inspection. This larger tonnage is due to the arcane nature of the U.S. vessel admeasurement laws, rules that govern the volumetric size of vessels. Larger competitor vessels can be 238 feet in length and carry 100 passengers, i.e., nearly 100 feet longer and 5 times the number of passengers, yet they are considered to be in the smaller 100 GT small passenger vessel category for both licensing and inspection purposes.

Needless to say, the M/V *Liseron* has an equity disparity as the vessel must compete with similar or larger vessels in the eco-tour-

ism trade. While the vessel is inspected and regulated for all safety purposes in a lower tonnage category, due to the higher tonnage rating entered on its certificate of inspection, the M/V *Liseron* must source crew from seafarers with deep water credentials (i.e., 500 GT) rather than for the shallower and protected waters of Southeast Alaska. The inequity is underscored by the fact that the M/V *Liseron* physically can fit within the volumetric profile of its competitors. That is, it is smaller, but the rules say it should be assigned a measurement of being larger. Further, the vessel carries far fewer passengers than its competitors. This seems to be a regulatory mismatch and creates the inequitable situation where a physically larger vessel that carries five times the number of passengers is determined to be smaller for crew licensing.

And this mismatch results in the M/V *Liseron* to have its master and chief mate with a license in a much higher tonnage category. The legislation I introduce today corrects this inequity and regulatory anomaly. This legislation prohibits the M/V *Liseron* from undergoing any alteration of its size. Consequently, there is no reason why the smaller M/V *Liseron* that carries far fewer passengers must have a crew licensed in a larger tonnage category.

To add to the inequity, a higher turnover for the master and first mate occurs because these mariners with the larger 500 GT licenses, which are more appropriate for deep water oceangoing vessels, leave whenever a deep-water position is available. This is understandable from their point of view. These 500 GT qualified crew get a larger tonnage license to work on larger seagoing vessels, not a smaller vessel operating in the shallow waters of bays, coastlines, and inlets in Southeast Alaska. This makes attracting 500 GT qualified crew that much more difficult. While the rest of the crew is stable, these two positions require that new hires undergo qualifying each time these positions turn over for these inland waters. If the master and first mate can hold 100 GT licenses it will result in less turnover and more appropriately experienced personnel that will contribute to even safer and consistent operation of the vessel. No alteration of the vessel itself is proposed nor will the crew size be reduced. Only two positions are affected by this legislation.

Another aspect of the vessel's operations is the economic impact of the cancellations due to the COVID-19. The operation of the eco-tourism trade in Southeast Alaska is seasonal. As a result, the M/V *Liseron* has lost an entire season of revenue due to cancellations. Continuing an artificial barrier such as having to hire crew in a mismatched licensing category will only add to the vessel's difficulties to recover from this economic loss when they are able to resume operations.

The tragic fire that occurred on board the dive vessel *Conception* on September 2, 2019, has brought additional scrutiny to small passenger vessels with overnight accommodations. Almost immediately after that fire an official marine investigation was commenced. I understand that in addition a criminal investigation is being conducted and will take a long time to complete. All of this is appropriate and should be done to get at the root of what went wrong on that vessel. As part of the safety concerns, the Coast Guard initiated a special Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) to review the safety of all small pas-

senger vessels with overnight accommodations. On October 8, 2019, the M/V *Liseron* was fully inspected by the Coast Guard as a vessel with overnight accommodations as part of this special inspection campaign. I understand that the CIC program included a job aid worksheet used by the Coast Guard inspectors to evaluate crew operations and procedures when inspecting the M/V *Liseron* and other overnight accommodation small passenger vessels. As a result of this special inspection, I understand that the Coast Guard confirmed that the vessel passed for every aspect of its certificate of inspection without exception and for crew performance. For passenger safety, the vessel has early warning and fire detection alarm systems, ready evacuation routes from each passenger cabin onto the main deck, and approved life rafts and vests. Having passed this rigorous and special inspection, the M/V *Liseron* is free of any of the issues on the *Conception*. The change brought about by this legislation will not create a vessel construction or safety issue.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me to enact this statutory provision permitting the Coast Guard to treat this vessel as less than 100 gross tons for the purpose of applying the operational regulatory measurement under section 14305 of title 46, United States Code, provided that nothing is done to change the size of the vessel. By adjusting the tonnage rating for licensing the M/V *Liseron's* crew to be consistent with its safety inspection category, the M/V *Liseron* would be able to hire and retain more appropriate experienced crew familiar with Southeast Alaskan waterways and small passenger vessel operations, and be regulated the same as other similar or larger vessels with which the M/V *Liseron* must compete.

NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS
FOR MISSING AND MURDERED
INDIGENOUS WOMEN

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize May 5, 2020 as the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Today, we recognize our nation's devastating history of colonization and the disproportionate effects for Native women. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed health care inequalities in our country, especially the health care available to Native communities. But we must be equally concerned about the number of Native women and girls that face incredible violence in this country every day. In the United States, Native women face tragically high rates of violence, sexual assault, and murder. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among Native women. These rates are ten times higher than the national average and far too often, families are left without answers.

I am a cosponsor of Savanna's Act, which will recognize Native women and make sure that their invisibility to law enforcement ends. The bill would create and improve procedures, communication, and cooperation among federal, state, tribal, and local agencies that may

share jurisdiction over crimes against Native women. We cannot allow the experiences of Native communities continue to slip through bureaucracy. Today, I am calling on House Leadership to quickly bring this bill to the floor.

I am thankful for the work of the City of Portland to shine a light on this issue by passing a resolution later this week calling attention to this urgent crisis. We need to all work together to demand action.

We must strive to better understand the institutional racism and systemic inequalities that Native communities face. I will keep fighting for justice for those who are missing or murdered, and I remain committed to taking action to prevent these crimes in the future.

CONGRATULATING THE EASTLAND
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKET-
BALL TEAM ON THEIR WIN AT
CLASS 1A IHSA STATE FINALS

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Eastland High School Girls Basketball Team, who won the Illinois High School Association's Class 1A State Finals Girls Basketball Tournament.

Despite being down by ten at half-time, the team ramped up their defense and came back to beat their opponent 62–57 in the state championship. Eastland finished the season

34–3, with the 34 wins being the most in program history. As a former athlete, I appreciate the fortitude the team displayed to achieve their dream of being a state champions and commend them for their efforts and attitude. This team is an example of the importance of dedication and a strong work ethic, and I am proud to see them represent Lanark so well throughout the state with his talent and passion.

It is because of student leaders such as the Eastland High School Girls Basketball Team that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate the Eastland High School Girls Basketball Team on their Class 1A State Finals title in Basketball.