

Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to Chairman SMITH of the Armed Services Committee and the entire Armed Services Committee and the overwhelming vote on a bipartisan basis of the U.S. House to pass this.

At long last, wage-grade workers in the civil defense industry in these particular districts will be paid fairly and equally alongside the salaried people they work side by side with.

This is a great day for Tobyhanna and a great day for the people who have the backs of the people who are our warfighters all over the world.

□ 0915

#### NATIONAL HIRE A VETERAN DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge tomorrow, July 25, as National Hire a Veteran Day.

Veterans are an important part of our community. They sacrifice a great deal to ensure that we live in a Nation that is free and safe. Sadly, when returning to civilian life, many of our Nation's veterans find themselves unemployed or underemployed.

I am an Army dad. My son was wounded in combat during a tour in Iraq, and so this issue is personal. My daughter-in-law is also a veteran.

Our veterans are highly trained and highly skilled. They deserve our support while deployed and when they return home. One of the best ways to do this is to prepare them for the workforce outside of the military. That is one of the reasons I was proud to co-sponsor the Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act last year with Congresswoman KATHERINE CLARK.

The bill instructs apprenticeship programs to account for a participant's competencies and prior experiences, including those gained during military service, among other things.

Mr. Speaker, the best way to thank a veteran is to hire a veteran. The skills obtained in service are invaluable.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 30th anniversary on Sunday of the Americans with Disabilities Act being signed into law by George H.W. Bush, President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to be the lead sponsor of that legislation in the House; a task that was assigned to me by our former whip, Tony Cuello of California.

The ADA is an example of what we can do together, in a bipartisan way, to

protect equal rights and help Americans access opportunities to get ahead, to be included, to be a part of one Nation indivisible.

It was a landmark piece of civil rights legislation which passed the House and Senate with strong, bipartisan support, and was signed into law, as I said, by President George H.W. Bush.

And when the Supreme Court ruled a narrow interpretation of the law that was overly limiting, Democrats and Republicans came together to pass the ADA Amendments Act in 2008, to restore the original intent and expand on its protections.

The ADA hasn't just led to the construction of accessible spaces, it has also helped change America's perception of those with disabilities. And it brought dignity and recognition to millions who previously were excluded and thought to be lesser-than because of their disabilities.

I have often said that the bill was misnamed. It should have been called the Americans with Abilities Act. Drop the "dis." Drop dissing people. Understand what they can do, which is what is important.

Over the past 30 years, the ADA has made it possible for so many of our fellow citizens to participate in the workforce, in government, and in every area of our society in ways they were previously unable to do without great difficulty.

The law, Mr. Speaker, breathed new life into the words of our Declaration, that all are "created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Indeed, the ADA was, in so many ways, a declaration of independence for the millions of Americans living with disabilities, yearning not only to be seen and accepted, but to be treated equally as they pursue happiness and the American Dream.

And it set a global standard, with its provisions adopted by literally scores of other countries throughout the world, so that the actions of this body and the United States Senate, and President George H.W. Bush were a signal to the world to include your citizens as well.

As we celebrate this anniversary, Mr. Speaker, let us remember that Americans with disabilities still face many hurdles in employment, education, access to healthcare, accessible technology, and the ability to live independently.

Mr. Speaker, I hope our country will use this moment, not only to reflect on the enormous differences we have made for people with disabilities, but also to rededicate ourselves to the task of continuing that work.

I want to take a moment to thank a number of my colleagues and former colleagues on both sides of the aisle who were instrumental in getting the ADA passed and signed into law.

But before I mention them, let me mention the literally unnamed, unknown thousands of people with disabilities who had the courage and the conviction to come to this body and say to us, I have great ability, but I am being shut out. Hear me. See me. Help me. And we responded, as a country, as a Congress.

Among them, of course, I have mentioned Tony Cuello, but then there was Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Bob Dole, Senator Ted Kennedy, Senator David Durenberger, Steve Bartlett, as well as Ham Fish, Teddy Kennedy, Major Owens, and Silvio Conte, who are no longer with us.

And, of course, the late President George H.W. Bush.

I want to thank the many advocates who were instrumental in building grassroots support for the ADA, as well as the Congressional and White House staff.

I would mention my own staff, Melissa Shulman, who did such an extraordinary job in shepherding the ADA through multiple committees, through hundreds of hours of discussion and debate as to how to make this a viable document, a workable document for inclusion and honoring the dignity of those with disabilities.

We worked late nights and we produced a text and built consensus.

I want to mention, in particular, Chai Feldblum, former lead attorney for the ACLU at the time and, later, an Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner, as well as former White House Counsel Boyden Gray, under President Bush.

I also, again, want to thank Melissa Shulman, who served on my staff and was critical to getting this law enacted.

I want to thank Representatives JIM LANGEVIN and DON YOUNG, who today serve as co-chairs of the Congressional Disability Caucus. Representative YOUNG, of course, was also involved in the passage of the law.

There are too many others—including the former chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Jim Sensenbrenner—to name here, individuals who gave their time, energy, and talents to making the ADA possible.

I want to mention Senator Orrin Hatch, who worked so diligently in the Senate, not only on the passage of the bill, but on the amendments as well, passed years later, after the Supreme Court tried to narrow the protections afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

And I am proud to join my friend from Rhode Island, Representative LANGEVIN, in introducing a resolution today to recognize the importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act, a celebration of the advancement of inclusion, and recognize the barriers that still remain for people with disabilities.