

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY
OF MR. WILLIE LEE LAWSON III

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my dear friend and pillar of the South Florida community, Mr. Willie Lee Lawson III. Willie sadly passed away on September 29, 2020. He will be deeply missed by those who knew and loved him. He was born in Americus, Georgia, to parents who instilled in him the importance of serving his community at an early age. Eventually, Willie and his family moved to Pompano Beach, Florida, where he would start to put those lessons to use as a community advocate.

Willie was a selfless leader who served multiple terms as the President of the Miami-Dade and North Broward County NAACP, respectively, and as the Chair of the Minority Business Council, New Alliance of Interactive Leaders & Supporters (NAILS) Founder & President, Advanced Certified Toastmaster, and committee leader for First-Time Homebuyers Program.

His dedication and passion for his community and colleagues was perhaps only outdone by the love he felt for his family. However, even here, Willie took the knowledge and love that came from being a parent and husband and used it to support the people around him. Whether it was a parent in need of help with a child who was in legal trouble, an employee who was wrongfully terminated from their job, or Black children in need of support in school, Willie always made time for anyone who needed his help.

Madam Speaker, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Willie's wife, Marie; and his children, Kimberly, Keisha, Miraj, and Willie. I pray they find comfort during this extremely difficult time. Willie will be dearly missed.

NATIONAL SPINA BIFIDA MONTH

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate October as National Spina Bifida Awareness Month; and to pay tribute to the numerous individuals and their families across our country living with this condition.

Spina Bifida is the nation's most common permanently disabling birth defect compatible with life. According to the March of Dimes, about 1,645 babies are born with this condition in the United States each year, with the prevalence being highest in the Hispanic population. Known as a neural tube defect, Spina Bifida stems from a hole in the spinal cord that

occurs because the spinal column fails to close properly during development in the womb; and, therefore, this condition impacts virtually every major organ system in the body. Children born with Spina Bifida typically undergo dozens of surgeries before they become adults. Adults living with Spina Bifida face a myriad of physical and mental health complications, as well as other challenges, such as unemployment and limited access to quality primary and specialty care.

Over the last three decades, we have made some strides in preventing the birth defect and managing the care of those born with this condition. In response to research that showed the incidence of Spina Bifida could be reduced by up to 70 percent with the addition of folic acid in a woman's diet, the United States Public Health Service recommended that all women of childbearing years should take 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to prevent having a pregnancy affected by a neural tube defect. Based on this recommendation, I introduced the Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act, which was passed into law as part of the Children's Health Act of 2000. This Act authorized a program within CDC to provide professional and public education for folic acid awareness. In 1998, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration required that folic acid be added to enriched grain products such as bread, pasta, rice, and cereal to increase the likelihood that women would have sufficient folic acid in their diet before becoming pregnant. And, in 2016, after years of advocacy with the FDA and the corn masa industry, folic acid fortification of corn masa flour was finally begun to target Hispanic communities that consume more corn masa products than grains. But there is still much work to be done to ensure adequate consumption of this critical nutrient that can prevent neural tube defects.

There are currently an estimated 166,000 individuals in the United States living with Spina Bifida, approximately 65 percent of whom are adults. This disease is now witnessing its first generation of adults, an incredible milestone, considering that the original designation of Spina Bifida as a childhood condition meant that the vast majority of children born with this condition did not experience life beyond youth. And while a generation of adults is an achievement worth celebrating, unfortunately there remain many unmet needs and additional health challenges affecting this medically fragile population.

As individuals develop, their clinical needs change, as should the type of care, and often the type of medical professional they see for that care. One of challenges faced by adults with this condition is that while we have a coordinated system of care designed to treat children with Spina Bifida in the United States, there is no equivalent for adults. Thus the "graduating child" enters into a very fractured medical system where individuals struggle to find physicians willing to provide treatment. Unfortunately, many of these physicians lack basic knowledge of this complex condition,

and hence thousands of young to middle-aged adults are left with few options other than to seek care in the emergency room, while some continue to see their pediatric care team at Spina Bifida Centers, which are designed for children.

In recent years, the Spina Bifida community has seen a growing incidence of sudden death in its over 25 population. There is speculation that this sudden loss of life has something to do with the central nervous system, but the cause or causes remain unknown. There has been much energy and resources devoted to ensuring that people with Spina Bifida can experience full lives that are not cut short by this condition. As such, we must explore and understand this sudden death phenomenon so we can reverse this troubling trend. Moreover, we must support—and expand investment in—research to address other issues related to Spina Bifida and associated secondary and co-morbid conditions, such as hydrocephalus, latex allergy, neurogenic bladder, developmental delay, and impaired executive functioning.

The CDC's National Spina Bifida Program is the sole federal program tasked with improving the care and outcomes for people with Spina Bifida. In 2008, the Spina Bifida Program created a National Spina Bifida Patient Registry (NSBPR) to collect the scientific data needed to evaluate existing medical services for spina bifida patients, and to provide clinicians, researchers, patients, and families a "window" into what care models are effective and what treatments are not making a measurable difference. Building on this in 2014, the Spina Bifida Program funded the development of a Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network (SBCCN) to identify and to disseminate "best practices" for the care of people with Spina Bifida at all ages. These programs are continuing to improve quality-of-life and outcomes for people with this birth defect, but their full potential has been constrained due to flat federal funding over the last six years. Additional funding could expand the number of clinics participating in the registry, and increase the amount of information reported, which in turn, will provide further insights into how to continue to improve care and outcomes for people with Spina Bifida.

People with Spina Bifida deserve no less than the rest of us as we age. During a lifetime, someone with Spina Bifida will face at least a \$1,000,000 in medical expenses, including multiple surgeries, and most can expect to spend much of their lives in a wheelchair or walking with braces. We must ensure that adults with Spina Bifida can receive evidence-based medical care tailored for their condition and receive that care in age-appropriate, non-emergency settings. I call upon my Congressional colleagues to prioritize increased funding for the CDC Spina Bifida Program to ensure that it will be poised to best guide the health care community in optimal treatment options for people living with Spina Bifida.

● 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.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL
BUSINESS COVID-19 DEBT RE-
LIEF EXTENSION ACT

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, the small business loan debt relief provision, as passed in the CARES Act, has expired with money still left in the fund. As we all know, small businesses have greatly suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent Washington Post article, one in five small businesses have closed this year, with many more expected. For the small businesses that remain open, the SBA loan debt forgiveness has proven to be a lifeline. The SBA has paid 6 months of principal, interest, and any associated fees that borrowers owe for all current 7(a), 504, and Microloans, as well as new 7(a), 504, and Microloans.

The COVID-19 pandemic is putting extraordinary strain on our smallest businesses—the very businesses who are the backbone of our economy. Small businesses have taken the biggest hits and need continued direct relief during this unprecedented time. That's why I have been fighting to provide relief through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), and the SBA debt relief program. These programs have proven to be effective to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, however, small businesses continue to need our support and we must not turn our backs on them.

Local economies are re-opening, but an expected second COVID-19 wave means small business owners will face additional uncertainties and burdens in the coming months. That is why I am introducing the Small Business Debt Relief Extension Act to offer small business owners up to a 6-month extension on the debt relief they are receiving on their 7(a), 504, and Microloans. Additionally, my bill ensures that the entirety of the \$17,000,000,000 appropriated to this program in the CARES Act be used for its intended purpose. The bill accomplishes this in two ways:

Businesses who are currently receiving or have (over the past 6 months) received the subsidy be granted a 6-month extension for a total of 12 months of debt relief; and Businesses who do not currently have a SBA loan and that apply up to March 30, 2021, receive a 6 month subsidy.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting the Small Business Debt Relief Extension Act.

CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL
OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF
BRYAN, TEXAS

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Mr. FLORES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100 year anniversary of The Rotary Club of Bryan, Texas.

Originally chartered in 1921, with only twenty-five founders; today, the club has grown to include a membership of approximately 150

people from all areas of Brazos County. The Bryan Rotary Club is passionately dedicated to its mission to “provide service to others; promote integrity; and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.”

From the beginning, the Bryan Rotary Club has had a broad membership from the twin cities of Bryan and College Station, bringing together a service-oriented mix of business and local professionals, as well as faculty and administrators from Texas A&M University.

Some notable events hosted by the club include its annual golf tournament, an annual beans and rice dinner, and the annual Newman 10 awards, which recognize the significant community contributions of Brazos Valley businesses.

In addition to celebrating local businesses, the Club is committed to supporting cultural activities, such as the Opera and Performing Arts Society Series, funding of the Bryan Heritage Society and Stage Center, as well as the club's very own “Singing Club.”

Madam Speaker, the Rotary Club of Bryan has had a significant and positive impact on the Brazos Valley during its 100-year history. Throughout this time, the club has grown considerably, and it has never forgotten its strong commitment to community service.

I have requested the United States flag be flown over our Nation's Capitol to recognize this significant milestone and their contributions to our community.

As I close today, I urge all Americans to continue praying for our country, for our veterans, for our military men and women who protect our security and liberties, and for our first responders who keep us safe at home.

HONORING C.T. WRIGHT

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Mr. STANTON. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Dr. C.T. Wright, who passed away in October 2020. A longtime resident of Arizona, Dr. Wright was a community leader, pastor, and criminal justice advocate. He was the embodiment of the American Dream and devoted his life to preaching unity and making Arizona a better place for all. From his work as chairman of the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency to his civic and religious pursuits, Dr. Wright was a force for good and his enduring legacy is his love for Arizona.

Born in Social Circle, Georgia, Dr. Wright lived many lives as a day laborer in the Georgia cotton fields, scholar, elementary school teacher, college professor, university president, and leader in criminal justice reform. Through all of this, he learned firsthand the value of persistence, open-mindedness and hard work—and how crucial they are in building better communities. These lessons refined his character and took him around the world.

After working in Africa, Dr. Wright decided to bring his message of unity and civility to Arizona, a place he called “the greatest state on the planet.” His voice would often echo through the chamber and halls of the Arizona State Senate, in rooms of state GOP meetings

and into the stands at campaign rallies when he delivered passionate prayers to members of a nation he saw as greatly divided—but not beyond repair. Throughout his years here, Dr. Wright quickly became a landmark member and advocate for Arizona's African-American community and earned his place as a delegate in political conventions, a member of the Arizona Electoral College, the Fountain Hills Unified School District Governing Board, chairman of the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency and many other honors.

After being appointed to the Board of Executive Clemency in May 2014, Dr. Wright helped give a second chance to inmates and their families through compassionate early releases. It was one of many positions Dr. Wright used to bridge the gap between faith and politics and help everyday Arizonans and political leaders make environments that encourage inclusivity, understanding and progress. Dr. Wright wasn't afraid to be outspoken but was reluctant of recognition. He wanted his work to speak for itself, and it has. His impact on his community was commemorated with the Congressional Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019.

As he leaves us, we should remember that he leaves us with lessons to act on and words to live by, “Behold how good and how pleasant it is together, together in unity.” I thank Dr. Wright for his life's work, and Godspeed.

HONORING COMMANDER THOMAS
KOEPE

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Commander Thomas Koepe for his exemplary dedication to his community, and to mark his retirement from the Hercules Police Department after more than 27 years of committed service.

Originally from El Cerrito, California, Commander Koepe began his service as a police officer for the city of Hercules in 1993. Since joining the force, Commander Koepe has risen through the ranks of the Hercules Police Department, serving as a Training Officer, Special Response Officer, and Police Sergeant before becoming a Police Commander in 2012. In 2018, he also briefly served as Acting Police Chief, leading the department during a time of transition.

Commander Koepe has consistently earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues and the public, and has been recognized countless times for his service to his community. In 1995, he was awarded the Medal of Valor for arresting a dangerous individual after a long and dangerous car chase. He also led his department in driving under the influence (DUI) arrests and was honored by both the department and Mothers Against Drunk Driving for his efforts to curtail the dangers of drunk driving. His dedication to the city is non-stop, as evident by the fact that he has received the Iron 96 award, given to those who do not use any sick leave, for 20 consecutive years.

Commander Koepe is not only an esteemed member of the police department, but he also plays an active role in his community.