

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE LATE JULIAN
WAGER

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 15, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay special tribute to Julian Wager, the legendary civic activist and community leader in the communities of western Queens, who passed away this month. Aply honored as the "Honorary Mayor of Long Island City" for his extraordinary character and dedication to the neighborhoods of the city he loved, Julie Wager was a uniquely beloved figure who provided lifelong service to others.

Over the course of six decades, Mr. Wager sought tirelessly to expand and improve professional, financial and networking opportunities for businesses and residents in the Borough of Queens. He provided both entrepreneurial and philanthropic services to the people of his beloved community of Astoria. His family's business, Genius Shop, has been an integral part of the fabric of the vibrant Astoria community for more than half a century. Among his many notable contributions to the resilient Astoria neighborhood, Julie Wager helped ensure the commercial vibrance of Steinway Street for future generations.

Mr. Wager was once memorably quoted as saying, "We work together within the communities, and we appreciate the values of the residents and the merchants. These are the people that support the myriad of charities that exist out there, not the trendy franchised stores who just take the bucks and get out." True to those precepts, Julie Wager was one of the foremost reasons why the business and commercial communities of western Queens remain a thriving hub of commercial activity while also serving as livable communities for tens of thousands of New Yorkers.

Among his extensive contributions to the civic and commercial life of western Queens, Julie Wager served as president of the Steinway Street Merchants Association for more than a quarter century. In 1979, he founded the Central Astoria Local Development Coalition and has served as its president for more than two decades. In 1991, he established the Steinway Street Business Improvement District, serving as its president and executive vice president.

Having suffered a serious spinal injury in 2000 that left him a paraplegic, Julie Wager remained undaunted in his valiant perseverance and undeterred from his determination to volunteer his energies on behalf of others. He served as vice president of the Walter Kaner Foundation; former chairperson of A Way Out; and as a member of Queens Community Board 1 for more than three decades. He was also an enterprising and dedicated advertising director for the Queens Gazette, an institutional pillar of the communities he knew and loved so well. He leaves six daughters and nine grandchildren. Like them, the residents

and communities of western Queens know that we shall not see the likes of Julie Wager again, and we are all the poorer for it.

Madam Speaker, I salute the life and work of Mr. Julian Wager and I ask that my distinguished colleagues in this House join me in recognizing his extraordinary service and contributions to the civic and business life of our nation's greatest city.

CBC HOUR

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in solemn sympathy with the residents of Haiti as they are once again forced to cope with a major catastrophe. As you know, on Tuesday, January 12th, a massive, 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince. There is still no official estimate of death or destruction, the damage to buildings is extensive and the number of injured or dead is estimated to be in the hundreds, even thousands.

Several eyewitnesses reported heavy damage and bodies in the streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, where concrete-block homes line steep hillsides.

Haiti sits on a large fault that has caused catastrophic quakes in the past, but this one was described as among the most powerful to hit the region within the last 200 years. With many poor residents living in tin-roof shacks that sit precariously on steep ravines arid with much of the construction in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere in the country of questionable quality, the expectation was that the quake caused major damage to buildings and significant loss of life.

The dimensions of the disaster are still unfolding, Haiti's Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told CNN that he believes there are well over 100,000 dead, and leading senator Youri Latortue estimated the number at possibly as high as 500,000, according the Associated Press.

Although this tragedy struck the land of our neighbor, it is also an American tragedy. The earthquake injured eight American employees working at the Embassy, including three who were medivaced. There are 3 U.S. citizens deaths currently reported but this number is expected to rise. Additionally, countless Americans have relatives in Haiti, and many of them are still unable to locate their loved ones.

America is responding, and will continue to respond with immediate humanitarian assistance to help the people of this struggling island nation rebuild their livelihoods. In the days ahead, I look forward to working with President Clinton, the Special Envoy to Haiti, to address the destruction caused by this natural disaster. I send my condolences to the people and government of Haiti as they grieve

once again in the aftermath of a natural disaster. As Haiti's neighbor, it is the United States' responsibility to help Haiti recover, and build the capacity to mitigate against future disasters.

America and her allies have already initiated a comprehensive, interagency response to the earthquake. The State Department, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, USAID—all worked overnight to ensure that critical resources are positioned to support the response and recovery effort, including efforts to find and assist American citizens in Haiti.

U.S. Southern Command will deploy a team of 30 people to Haiti to support U.S. relief efforts in the aftermath of yesterday's devastating earthquake. The team includes U.S. military engineers, operational planners, and a command and control group and communication specialists, will arrive in Haiti today on two C-130 Hercules aircraft. The team will work with U.S. Embassy personnel as well as Haitian, United Nations and international officials to assess the situation and facilitate followup on U.S. military support.

Our friends in the international community must also be commended for their efforts. The United Nations is releasing \$10 million from its emergency funds. The European Commission has approved €3 million (\$4.37 million) with more funds likely. Countless other nations from Germany, to China, to Israel to Mexico have also pledged support. I commend each of these nations for coming to a nation in dire need of assistance. Many of my constituents ask what they can do to help, or how they can find their loved ones. Those who are interested in helping immediately may text HAITI to 90999 and a donation of \$10 will be made automatically to the Red Cross for relief efforts. The donation will be charged to your cell phone bill.

The State Department also suggested contacting agencies such as the Red Cross or Mercy Corps to help with relief efforts.

For loved ones, The U.S. State Department Operations Center set up the following number for Americans seeking information about relatives in Haiti: (888) 407-4747. The department cautioned that because of heavy volume, some callers may hear a recording.

This weekend I will return to Houston, where I will meet with my Haitian-American constituents. It is important to mention that the Department of Homeland Security has already put a hold on the scheduled deportation of Haitians in America. I cannot imagine that any Member of Congress will rise to challenge this assistance to Haitian families in their time of need.

Once again, I am devastated by the immeasurable tragedy that occurred in Haiti. Along with my colleagues, I hope to visit Haiti in the near future to meet with their leaders and see what the United States can do to rebuild the shattered livelihoods.

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