

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF GOVERNOR REUBIN ASKEW

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life, accomplishments, and dedicated service of one of Florida's greatest citizens, Former Governor Reubin Askew. Governor Askew was an inspiration to Floridians of all political stripes and ideologies. The State of Florida, and our entire Nation, mourns the loss of a true patriot, political titan, and a great man.

Reubin O'Donovan Askew was born on September 11, 1928 in Muskogee, Oklahoma. At the age of eight, he moved with his mother to her native town of Pensacola, Florida, where he spent the rest of his childhood and adolescence. From a young age, Governor Askew displayed an assiduous work ethic, taking great pride in working to help contribute to the family's finances with jobs as a paperboy, magazine salesman, shoeshine boy, and grocery bagger. After graduating from Pensacola High School in 1946, Governor Askew followed in the footsteps of his two older brothers, who had served in World War II, into military service, joining the Army as a paratrooper.

After two years in the Army, Governor Askew enrolled at Florida State University, where his future in politics was presaged by a term as student government president. During his time at Florida State, Governor Askew also participated in Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and, upon graduation, he was commissioned as an officer and called to active duty, where he oversaw reconnaissance planes flying missions in Europe. Governor Askew served two years in the Air Force, before enrolling at the University of Florida's School of Law. Upon his graduation in 1956, he moved back to Pensacola, where he was elected assistant county solicitor. That same year, he married his wife of nearly 60 years, Donna Lou.

Governor Askew was a man of great faith, and, when he began his resulting 20-year career in public service, with election to the Florida House of Representatives in 1958, he used the Lord's teachings to govern with a strong moral compass. Following his first term in the Florida House, Governor Askew was elected to the Florida State Senate, where he served two terms before deciding to run for governor in 1970. Despite being relatively unknown on the state level, Governor Askew campaigned on a strong populist platform and emphasized his strong faith and devotion to family to win the governorship.

Governor Askew's list of accomplishments during his time in the Governor's mansion are legion and far too numerous to fully list in any one space. In fact, so vast were his accomplishments, that the John F. Kennedy School

of Government at Harvard University named Governor Askew one of the top 10 governors of the 20th century, ranking him with men who went on to serve as President, like Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, as well as a future Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Earl Warren.

Today, Governor Askew is perhaps best remembered for championing and shepherding through one of our Nation's most robust transparency and freedom of information laws, through Florida's Sunshine Law and Amendment, which opened up government meetings and required financial disclosure by all public officials, candidates, and employees. As Governor Askew remarked, "You've got to remember in government whose business you're doing: the people's, and if you're doing the people's business, you've got to give them the tools to judge the product."

Thanks to his strong moral character and determined leadership, Governor Askew became the first governor in Florida's history to be re-elected to consecutive terms. In addition to his successful transparency reforms, Governor Askew will be remembered as a true leader on many of the toughest issues of his day, including racial integration. Governor Askew had long followed his faith and principles on the issue of racial justice, arguing during his time as Florida State University Student Government President for integrating the higher-education system, and during his time as governor he successfully and harmoniously integrated Florida's schools, state government and appointed the first African-American Florida Supreme Court Justice, Joseph W. Hatchett. During his tenure, Governor Askew additionally fought to reduce the tax burden on individual Floridians, while also increasing the homestead exemption and repealing consumer taxes on household utilities and long-term apartment rentals.

Following his second term in office, Governor Askew served two years as the United States Trade Representative. Governor Askew was also highly committed to educating Florida's and our Nation's youth and in the mid 1980s, he began a second career as an educator. For ten years, he taught classes at each of Florida's public universities, before joining the faculty at his alma mater, Florida State University, in 1995, where he taught for the remainder of his life. In 1994, in recognition of his service to the State of Florida, Florida State University, named the School of Public Administration and Policy, the Reubin O'D Askew School of Public Administration and Policy, and in 2006, it named a student life center on campus after him as well. In addition, the University of Florida established the Reubin O'D Askew Institute on Politics and Society to assist Florida's citizens and communities in examining critical issues by bringing policymakers, educators, students, and community members together to aid them in making decisions to enhance Florida's future.

Mr. Speaker, public service is both a calling and a truly noble pursuit. It is not an easy undertaking, and success is not guaranteed. Yet,

despite its challenges, there are some individuals who were seemingly created by the Lord to lead in this vital arena. Governor Reubin Askew was one of these individuals. Those who were fortunate enough to know him will be forever inspired by his example, and the entire Northwest Florida community is proud that such a great man and fine public servant hailed from the Florida Panhandle. On behalf of the entire United States Congress, my wife Vicki and I extend our deepest prayers and condolences to Governor Askew's wife, Donna Lou; his children, Kevin and Angela; his many grandchildren; and the entire Askew family.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN HOTEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION (AAHOA)

HON. AMI BERA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to congratulate the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) on celebrating their 25th anniversary. Founded in 1989, AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world and represents over 12,500 members nationwide. My family and I are proud to be counted among them.

AAHOA's achievements over the past quarter century are one of the greatest examples we have today of capturing the American Dream. Comprised of first and second generation Indian Americans, AAHOA members and their families immigrated to the United States seeking opportunity. These entrepreneurs found a niche as hoteliers and soon became a profound influence on the hospitality industry.

Today, AAHOA members own over 40 percent of all hotels in the United States employing over 600,000 people with an annual payroll of almost \$10 billion.

It is also my pleasure to recognize AAHOA's chairman, Mehul "Mike" Patel for his exceptional leadership this year. Mehul and his family came to the United States from Valsad in Gujarat India when he was a teenager and they lived and worked in a motel in Garland, Texas. The lessons of hard work and perseverance he learned while growing up in the motel have served him well and today he is the chairman and CEO of NewcrestImage, Hotel Development and Management Company, with multiple hotel properties across the United States.

Mehul's vision has been instrumental in elevating AAHOA to the next level. Under Mehul's stewardship, AAHOA has reached record levels of membership, and advanced its position as the voice of hotel owners with members in nearly every congressional district in the United States. Mehul is a dynamic leader in his community and industry and I am proud to commend his accomplishments.

I would also like to recognize AAHOA's officers, Vice Chairman Pratik Patel, Treasurer

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