

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as the senior member of the New York delegation, it affords me a great honor to come from the Empire State of New York, where we have so many people we are proud of, but because Mario Cuomo represented the true nature of the American Dream, we from the State of New York would just like to laud the contributions that he has made, not just to Queens, where he was raised, not just to the great State of New York, but to those democratic principles that all of us believe in, and no one could articulate it the way our great Governor has.

So many people have come to this country from faraway places, and somehow, when they succeed, some change their names, some change their attitudes, and some just absolutely forget how they got here and how they were perceived; but Mario Cuomo was different.

Mario was so proud of the fact that his parents were immigrants. He was proud of the fact that they came here with nothing but a hope and a dream that their son would succeed. He succeeded in everything that he touched, from neighborhood arbitration, to secretary of state, to Lieutenant Governor; and, of course, the Nation remembers him as Governor and as one who articulated the principles not of the Democratic Party, but of the entire country at a Democratic Convention.

Of course, he leaves behind a son who, for those of us who attended his funeral would have to say not only did he talk about his father in terms that made us all feel proud, but in that voice that he had, if you closed your eyes for one moment, you would see that Mario Cuomo did not die. He left his son to continue in describing the great opportunity that we have in this great country.

I am so glad that so many New Yorkers are here. Because we are here for such a short period of time—we are in committees and reorganizing—the delegation has asked me to reduce my remarks to 2 minutes, and I share that concern with the rest of our great delegation.

It is my great pleasure to yield back the balance of my time so that the gentleman from New York, JOSEPH CROWLEY, may control the remainder of my time.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF MARIO CUOMO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the minority leader of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I thank the distinguished member and longest-serving member—I don't

want to say "senior member"—in the New York delegation for getting us off to a start to sing the praises of Mario Cuomo. It is my honor to join the New York delegation. I feel honored to do so. Four of our children were born in New York, so that gives me some standing on the subject.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to join the New York delegation in paying tribute to the memory of Governor Mario Cuomo. I am reminded of Ecclesiasticus. We all know this, but just think of how appropriate it is for Mario Cuomo.

In Ecclesiasticus, it says:

Now let us praise great men, the heroes of our Nation.

They led the people by their counsel and their knowledge of the laws. From their font of wisdom, they gave instruction.

These are godly men whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten. Their wealth is their descendants, and their inheritance is their children's children. Their bodies are buried in peace, and their names will live forever.

The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will continue to sing their praise.

Does that remind you of Mario Cuomo? Is that perfectly appropriate for him? Surely, those words apply to the life and legacy of our great departed friend, Mario.

As a fellow Italian American, I have always taken great pride in his leadership. As a San Franciscan who hosted the Democratic Convention, we in California had some kind of claim on Mario Cuomo because of the great speech that he made at that convention which Mr. RANGEL referenced, but my observing of his greatness goes farther back than that.

It was during a trip to Italy that we were invited by President Carter in 1980 to bring the sympathy and support of the American people to Italy at the time of the earthquake, when they lost 2,700 lives and which left 265,000 people homeless. I mention that because we went by helicopter from village to village to village. Villages were devastated.

Mario Cuomo, here was this person who had such a large spirit and a good soul, who could sympathize with these people in English and Italian. For example, in a village where a First Communion class was rehearsing for First Communion, all of the 7-year-olds in that village were in that church when the earthquake hit. The roof came down, and every 7-year-old in the village was lost.

Imagine the grief of those individual families and of that community to lose those children, but as you would expect, he was up to the task, knowing that words were completely inadequate and that no sympathy could meet the pain that they were feeling; nonetheless, there was this beautiful, sympathetic man identifying with these people from a region from which his family had come in southern Italy.

Mario Cuomo was a pillar of strength through his community, his State, and

our Nation. His values, his vision, and his effectiveness for the people of New York were an inspiration around the world. He was a man of principle and eloquence—that was good—and all the world saw, again, that manifested in the "shining city on a hill" speech at the 1984 Democratic Convention.

With those soaring words, Governor Cuomo summoned the best of America and called us to empower the working people and middle class families who are the backbone of our Nation. He asked us to remember how futures are built. We know Mario Cuomo's language and leadership will echo through the ages just as vital, just as urgent, just as energizing as his words were that day.

In word and deed, Governor Cuomo challenged us to make real the American Dream. He had it for his family. He wanted it for everyone else, for all who strived to realize it, and opened the doors of opportunity for every American family.

Family meant everything to him. He was a proud Governor of New York for three terms, but his proudest achievement was his beautiful family. No one could miss the pride and inspiration he found in his immigrant parents and how he talked about them so beautifully or in his boundless dedication to Matilda and his children.

Our country has lost a great leader, but his family has lost a devoted husband to his wife of over 60 years, to Matilda. He was a loving father to five children—Margaret, Andrew, Maria, Madeline, and Christopher—and was a doting grandfather to some really lovely grandchildren.

My husband, Paul, and I and our entire family are heartbroken. We are really heartbroken by his passing, and we continue to extend our deepest sympathy and love to Matilda and their family.

I hope it is a comfort to them that so many people in their own State, in the country, and, really, throughout the world mourn their loss and continue to pray for them and continue to be inspired by this great man.

As Ecclesiasticus says:

People will tell of his wisdom, and the congregation will continue to sing his praise.

I thank Mr. CROWLEY for yielding. I thank him for bringing us together to sing the praises of Mario Cuomo.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Rochester, New York, LOUISE SLAUGHTER.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I thank Mr. CROWLEY for yielding to me. There is so much on my mind as to what I could say about him.

I knew him longer than the rest of the New Yorkers. I met him in 1973. I was a member of the Democratic State committee in Rochester, New York, and I was asked by the district attorney to come over to his house and meet a man from New York City who was thinking about running for Governor; so I joined my friends and sat in the

living room for about an hour, awaiting the guest from New York to get off the telephone in the kitchen and come out and talk to us.

He came out. He was perfectly charming, but he didn't know upstate New York. He started by telling us: "A lot of people are talking to me about running for Governor, and I thought it would be a good idea if I came up here to see what all of you thought."

I left the house that night, and I said to my friend that I was driving with: "He is really a nice guy, and he is very smart, but, boy, he needs a lot of help." I was really pretty lucky, I think, that I got to do that. As it turns out, Governor Carey ran for Governor at that time, and Mr. Cuomo was appointed secretary of state.

He had some great ideas for upstate New York. One of them was they were going to have an upstate coordinator, which is kind of an amorphous title, but I was very blessed that he let me try that job. I had been out of the workforce. I was home. My youngest child was about 12 years old. It was back in the day when one income could bring up a family and educate them.

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And so trying to get back into work and to get back into all of that was pretty difficult for me. And I am not sure anybody else would have put up with me, other than Mario Cuomo, giving me every opportunity in the world to try to learn what it is we were trying to do.

But, boy, did I ever teach him a few things. We had an old State car, a rattletrap. I drove him all over upstate New York, and the conversations we had would absolutely astound you.

We stopped one day in one of our beautiful rural villages in upstate named Pavilion to get a cup of coffee. And a 16-year-old girl came out to wait on us. And here he was: a new person to speak to. Now, those of you who knew him know how exciting that would be. And he started in by asking her, What was the main business in Pavilion? What was the gross domestic product there? He was asking her all these questions. And all she wanted to do was get him a cup of coffee. And I felt a little sorry for her, so I said, "He is the secretary of state." Unfortunately, I forgot the part to say secretary of state of New York. She went back into the kitchen, knowing this man was not Henry Kissinger, and never came back out.

And as we rode around in this old red car, he would ask me about the cornfields. And I will tell you, if my agriculture people knew what a botch I made of trying to explain to him the life of the cornstalk, it was really awful. And he would say things like, How do they heat that house over there? What do you think they do? Where do they all go to school? Everything in the world interested him.

He was the most extraordinary teacher that I have ever had. I just had

those 2 years of showing him upstate New York. And then when he got elected lieutenant governor—I ran that upstate campaign—the State Police took over. But we still carried on all these great conversations we had. And I remember one of the policemen said once that no matter how upset Mario was, when he got off the plane and would go 10 miles or 10 rounds with Louise, they were off on a whole other subject.

I learned so much from him. And I know that everybody thinks of him as a one-speech maker sort of a—but let me tell you, that was not it. The speech that he made at Notre Dame was so incredibly wonderful and so important and so instructive that everybody should read that as well. But one of my very favorites was when he made his speech about my hometown of Rochester on Lake Ontario.

He described Rochester as a necklace of neighborhoods clustered around the lake. Now that is talking. And he also talked about life, that our life needed to be more than to just hope always to land on the safe squares. And we thought that was such an incredible thing to think about, that your life had to have more meaning than that.

The people that we worked with at the secretary of state's office who were holdovers from the previous administration had said to me many, many times how wonderful it was for them to be able to work for such a first-rate lawyer. And believe me, he really was.

He loved the country, as NANCY PELOSI pointed out. His love of his family was absolutely legendary. He was a man of deep conviction, of religious faith, who loved his family more than anything. But he also loved the great opportunity that this country had given to him.

He talked so admiringly of his father and the strength that his father and mother had, coming here with literally nothing. And it was the manual labor that his father did to lift himself up and, consequently, his family to a better life, and the country.

He loved New York. He loved its people. He loved its history more than anything. He loved the institution of governing.

So I speak of him as somebody that maybe other people didn't get to know the way I did, but I admired him always. And I am pretty sure I would not be in elected office at all had I not had the opportunity to learn from him, the wonderful opportunity to represent our neighbors and to come down and to try to make law and to make some changes.

So I thank you very much for the time, Mr. CROWLEY. We will not see his like again.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the gentlelady.

I now yield to the gentleman from the Bronx, Mr. SERRANO.

(Mr. SERRANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SERRANO. I thank my colleague, Mr. CROWLEY.

This week in 1975, I became a member of the New York State Assembly. This week in 1975, Mario Cuomo became secretary of state. I left to come to Congress in 1990, so I am fortunate to have served in the legislature 16 of the 20 years that he served in the executive branch.

And in 1983, when I became chairman of the Education Committee, I really got to know him and to speak to him and to understand what everyone that has spoken has already said. Above all, this man never forgot, and he understood how important it was for him to be the son of an immigrant family. So he wanted everyone else to have the same opportunity.

Yes, he was eloquent. Yes, he had to be a great human being—after all, he was a minor league baseball player and was signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates, I believe, to play ball, that alone makes him a great guy. But he was an eloquent man who also remembered his humble beginnings in the grocery store, having to work to get through law school, to be able to understand.

So when I stood in front of him as one who had been born an American citizen—but a lot of people forgot along the way that we were and treated us in a different way—he understood. There was that simpatico that he had with him, where he understood where we came from and what we needed. And I am just so honored to have served all those years with Mario Cuomo and to have considered him a friend.

When I went to his funeral, Matilda was just so gracious because she wrote a book once where she asked people to write about who had influenced them. And I wrote about a certain gentleman in the Bronx who had played major role in my starting my public career. And she remembered that.

And I, once again, offer my condolences to the Cuomo family.

But we should not feel sorry that he is gone. We have been blessed with the fact that he lived among us. And for me, 16 of those 20 years, I learned so much from him, and hopefully I was able to help him along the way at times too.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank my friend from the Bronx.

And I yield to the gentleman from Manhattan, Mr. NADLER.

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I too came to the legislature and served for 16 years there. And for most of that time, Mario Cuomo was Governor.

We all know that he was an eloquent philosopher in politics, someone who could express the goals and the principles of public office and of government more eloquently than almost anyone else.

Mario Cuomo graduated first in his class from St. John's Law School in 1946. And despite sending out over 70 resumes, he couldn't get a response or an interview from a top law firm because he was Italian. And that was the

state of prejudice in this country—or at least on Wall Street in 1946.

He went on from there to become a major lawyer, to become the Governor of a State, to become a leader of a philosophy in American politics. But in doing so, he never forgot where he came from. He didn't forget his experiences, and he knew that other people were having similar experiences.

He was a man of great principle. He vetoed the death penalty—though he knew that the death penalty was very popular in New York—12 times in a row, and he sustained those vetoes. Having not forgotten where he came from, he always wanted to use government to help defenseless people who needed the help of government, and he did.

We all know many of the things he did. I am not going to repeat them here. But I want to just mention a couple of things that didn't get great publicity but that I saw as a member of the legislature.

When he became Governor, he set up a commission. I forget the exact title—Commission on Child Support, Commission on Day Care, whatever it was. But every year for years, that commission came up with legislation which he supported and pushed, and some of us in the legislature worked on that. And he passed—we passed pioneering legislation, pioneering in this country on child support enforcement, which was considered a radical idea in the early 1980s. We passed the Child Support Standards Act so that judges couldn't leave women and their children without adequate support. He passed day care resource and referral legislation and family day care, all of which came from the initiatives of Governor Cuomo, none of which got a lot of publicity, which was focused on so-called bigger items. But these helped people. These were vital for people living their lives without a lot of money, without a lot of resources. But government became a helper and a friend because of Governor Cuomo.

Mr. CROWLEY. Thank you, Mr. NADLER.

I now yield to the gentlelady from Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, Ms. NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a leader who inspired not only New Yorkers but who also captured the imagination of progressives across the Nation. At a time when our national dialogue was dominated by those seeking to leave working families to fend for themselves, Governor Cuomo outlined a different vision. Through his policies as Governor and his evocative speaking abilities, he articulated our moral obligation to care for one another while working toward a society that benefits all Americans, not only the affluent and powerful.

All of us remember his famous words from the Democratic convention in San Francisco. Questioning conservatives'

rose-colored view of the Nation, he noted we were becoming too much a "tale of two cities," rather than a "shining city on a hill." That speech crystallized the differences in competing philosophies between those who believe Americans can do more to help one another and those who think our Nation has already reached its greatest heights and cannot further improve.

However, just as he was serving as an intellectual lodestar for progressive and liberals nationally, Mario Cuomo remained dedicated to improving New Yorkers' lives. A son of Queens, in many ways, he reflected the aspirations and dreams of that borough's residents. Today, Queens is where families of all backgrounds—Latinos, Asian, Italian, and Greek immigrants—converge to secure a decent, affordable place to live.

In today's political landscape, we could all benefit from remembering those words. In today's cynical environment, many have forgotten the tremendous good our government can achieve in pursuing justice, creating opportunity, and caring for neighbors in need.

Governor Cuomo made many contributions, but that may be among his most important. He provided the intellectual framework to remind us that we have more to do, that our Nation can be better, and that we cannot afford to leave our fellow New Yorkers and Americans behind.

For ensuring these ideas remain part of our national conversation, all of us owe him a debt and all of us appreciate his decades of steadfast service.

I send my thoughts and my prayers to his family, including his son, Governor Andrew Cuomo. I hope they can take comfort in knowing that all of us join in mourning with them.

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Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. I now yield to the gentlelady from Queens and Manhattan and Brooklyn, Mrs. CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership in so many ways, and I thank the leader of the Democratic Party for leading us in this tribute to our great Governor. We appreciate very much your presence and support of Mario Cuomo on the floor.

It seems only fitting and proper for us to pay tribute to the late Mario Cuomo here in this historic Chamber, here where some of the most powerful and eloquent speakers in our Nation's history have changed the course of human events, not with swords but with words and ideas.

Mario Cuomo, the former Governor of New York, the liberal lion of the Empire State, the conscience of the Democratic Party, and a cherished friend, had few peers when it came to making the power of ideas and ideals irresistible forces for good.

His faith, his passion, his values, and his unique gifts produced in him an unrivaled ability to articulate the plight, defend the rights, and engage the hopes of ordinary citizens.

I had the great fortune to be a delegate when he gave one of the most storied speeches at the National Democratic Convention in 1984. I will never forget it. When Mario Cuomo spoke, it electrified the whole convention. We were transfixed by the power of his appeal right to the deepest reaches of our common humanity.

He made all of us feel like we needed to do more, work harder, and help others because that is what really came through when Mario Cuomo spoke: his deep, unwavering commitment to fundamental decency, justice, and humanity.

He spoke to a sitting President on behalf of the forgotten and the dispossessed. He spoke to the powerful on behalf of the powerless. "There is despair," he said, "in the faces you don't see and the places you don't visit."

Mario Cuomo was right. He spent his life working and looking out for the hardworking people who build our shining cities, who supply our food, who teach our children, who staff our hospitals, people who are too often overlooked, overlooked, and underserved.

His own family had owned a store in Jamaica, Queens, and he knew full well the value of hard work and of education. He lived the American Dream and spent his life trying to build the American Dream for others. Mario Cuomo worked his way into St. John's University. He attended St. John's University School of Law in New York and graduated first in his class.

He first rose to public attention when he came roaring out of Queens back in the 1970s to challenge city hall's condemnation of a working class neighborhood in Corona. People quickly began to appreciate that Mario Cuomo had the transformative power to inspire others to demand for themselves a more just and humane society and a better government. He insisted that representative government should be just that: a government for all the people.

Whenever he was on the ballot—and I remember as an active Democrat then—Democrat registration went up because everybody wanted to vote for and help elect Mario Cuomo. They knew he would do everything in his power to give them a fair shake.

He once told me—and I always had these terrible elections. He would always tell me that he was my fairy godfather, and he would grant me three wishes to win the election, but only on one condition, that I would go out and grant three wishes to someone else and help them do a better job in what they wanted to do.

He was a wonderful friend and a mentor, a husband, a wonderful father. As a parent, there is no question he did a remarkable job. One son is a Governor, another is a news anchor, one daughter

is a physician, another active in continuing the family work in housing the homeless, and another is an attorney. If that was all that he ever did, that would be plenty for one lifetime.

Mario Cuomo did much more. He was secretary of state of the great State of New York, then Lieutenant Governor, and finally Governor for three terms. He led New York to provide health care for children. He began the Decade of the Child, an effort that used multiple health care and educational strategies to better the lives of our most vulnerable. He passed the child support enforcement bill.

Under his leadership, the most intense public health plan in the Nation was put in place to take on the AIDS epidemic. Under Mario Cuomo, New York State became the first State in the Nation to enact a seatbelt law. He was a great man, and I am proud beyond all telling to be able to say that he was a friend, a mentor, and a supporter.

I grieve his passing, and I send my most heartfelt condolences to his family and his friends. I shall miss the singular and remarkable man until the end of time. To know him was to love him.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Queens and part of Nassau, Mr. MEEKS.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

When I think of Governor Mario Cuomo, many talk about his great oratory, many talk about some of the fantastic speeches that he made, but when I think about Mario Cuomo, he didn't just talk the talk; he walked the walk.

His speeches were not made just because it was a political gathering or forum. His speeches were made because that is what he truly believed. It came from his heart. It is how he lived his life, and you could see that in how he dealt with his family because that was his foundation.

From that foundation, he was able to build—and starting with that little place in Jamaica, Queens, that I am now proud to represent, he looked at Queens and then, by extension, the city of New York and then, by extension, the State of New York as the foundation of which he could make a difference, learning from his growing up with his parents.

As a result, you found individuals falling in love with Mario Cuomo, and you could see that by the people that were around him who became completely loyal to him because he had a real great leadership.

Once you became infected with the spirit of Mario Cuomo, you continued to stay around him, and you would see in the visuals who were with Mario Cuomo until the day that he died folks loyal to him. In this business in this day and age, sometimes, if you don't have that kind of character, people come, and people go.

Lastly, because I know that we have got so many members of the New York

delegation that are here that want to speak, let me just say that he was competitive. I can think about those days when—I thank him first because he talked about getting into politics, he allowed me to cut my teeth by appointing me first to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board as a judge, then later appointed me to become the supervising judge in the State, having me going all over the State, and then encouraging me to run for the State assembly and, once I got elected to the State assembly, working very closely with him.

Once I got into the assembly, I thought he was a nice guy until you got on the basketball court. How competitive was he on that basketball court? Elbows—I look at some of the players now when they are complaining, et cetera, well, you need to go play old school basketball with Governor Mario Cuomo.

I close by saying that I thank God—because he was a very religious man, Mario Cuomo, too, but God could have sent him to California; he didn't. He could have had him in Illinois or in Texas or in Florida; no.

We were fortunate because God had him, through his parents, who emigrated from Italy to come to a place where the Statue of Liberty was, who believed "Give me your tired, give me your weary," who believed in family, and we had him in the great State of New York.

Thank you, Governor Mario Cuomo.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend.

I now yield to the gentleman from Buffalo, New York (Mr. HIGGINS). Mario Cuomo was known all over New York State, obviously, as the Governor, but my colleague BRIAN HIGGINS knew him well.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues, to honor the life and legacy of Governor Mario Cuomo who passed away on January 1 at the age of 82.

When we think of Governor Cuomo, we think of him along with his son—now Governor Andrew Cuomo—and then his counsel Tim Russert from Buffalo driving in a car, riding from the airport to the Moscone Center in San Francisco, still writing new sections of his historic keynote address at the 1984 Democratic National Convention which catapulted him forever as a prominent figure within the Democratic Party.

Less remembered than his speeches but just as admirable were his writings. He wrote extensively on the American Dream his immigrant parents achieved, and the numerous causes that he cared about, "Diaries of Mario M. Cuomo," "Reason to Believe," "Why Lincoln Matters," and "More Than Words," which is a collection of 31 speeches he wrote going back to 1974.

As a student of government, a teacher of government, and now as a practitioner, in 2006, I went to see Governor Cuomo, former Governor Cuomo, who

was practicing law in Manhattan at a place called Willkie, Farr, and Gallagher. Remember, I had 15 minutes scheduled with him and left 2 hours later. I told him that his writings, going back to 1974, were as relevant today as they were when they were written. They were timeless; they were classics.

My favorite story is the one that he told about how he came to edit the book, "Lincoln on Democracy." In 1988, Governor Cuomo met in Albany with a delegation from the teacher section of Poland's Solidarity Union, which was the leading advocate for bringing democracy to Poland when it was under Communist rule.

The teachers told the Governor that they were building an archive of influential and insightful writings on democracy. They asked if he could recommend writings by American thinkers that had influenced his approach to public service and democracy. Cuomo immediately identified Abraham Lincoln as his favorite source of wisdom.

The Polish delegation said, "Governor, Lincoln's writings and speeches are not available in Poland." In fact, they were banned. Cuomo promised to give them the speeches that they needed in order to appreciate what he had come to appreciate in Lincoln.

Cuomo says, "Delegation, come over here." He pulled out the 378-page index of the collected works of Abraham Lincoln—not one mention of democracy in those works; so together with Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer, he wrote, edited, and published "Lincoln on Democracy," a book that to this day is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the uniquely American approach to democracy and governance. True to his word, the Polish version of the book appeared in Warsaw in early 1990 before its English version was available in the United States.

Mario Cuomo's gift was that he forced us to think for ourselves. He forced us to consider our history, and he forced us to recognize our responsibility to build a foundation that is better than the foundation that those who came before us built for us.

That is the true meaning of the American Dream, and it was embodied by a unique individual who was an unlikely successful lawyer, an unlikely Governor of New York, Mario M. Cuomo.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments on Governor Cuomo. I now yield to my colleague and friend from the upstate region, Mr. PAUL TONKO, who also served in the State assembly while Mario Cuomo was Governor.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Queens, State of New York, for the opportunity to share some thoughts here this evening with our leader, NANCY PELOSI, and members of the New York delegation, as we pay tribute to the life of Mario Matthew Cuomo, the greatest of Governors in New York, and certainly a true

statesman, a bold and great individual, a humble giant, and a roaring voice, a lion voice for social, economic, and environmental justice.

This evening, what I recall about the life of Mario Cuomo is that as I entered the New York State Assembly in 1983, that was the same year that he entered into the office of Governor, and for my first 12 years of service in the New York State Assembly, it was guided and nurtured and impacted by the strength and the passion of Mario Cuomo.

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The walk with him and with Matilda Raffa Cuomo as a first couple of New York was a joyous one but a challenging one to pay tribute to the greatness, the foundation of family, and the passion of immigrants. Those two guiding dynamics drove the principles, the integrity, and the message of Mario Cuomo.

As a member of his upstate cabinet informing and alerting the Governor to various strengths, vitalities, contributions, and history of upstate New York, we were able to connect in a very meaningful way; the work with him very deliberate and very challenging. I will forever be grateful for the learning curve that was developed by working alongside this person of greatness.

I think, also, we need to understand that, as his son Governor Andrew Cuomo eulogized at his funeral service, he made mention very deliberately, Mario Cuomo would not offer, render his words of speeches to an audience telling them what they choose to hear but, rather, what he needed to share. That, I think, speaks to the humble greatness of this individual, one who had a vision not only for his State, but for his country and, for that matter, the world.

I was also touched by the Governor's sharing about his dad, the eloquence of his speech, the eloquence of his speaking, his public speaking that reached so many people throughout the world. He talked about those words and put it into an analogy of a fine bit of jewelry where each word seen as a gem would be deliberately chosen, strategically placed, and majestically clustered in a way where that array would reach our senses, would speak to our senses about what is correct, what is socially just and morally sound. That is true leadership. And it is no wonder through that speech in San Francisco that he lit within the minds, hearts, and souls of Americans the best within us, how we could assume this level of greatness by understanding that we are at our best when we incorporate in an inclusive set of principles in our world of politics.

Mario Cuomo impacted all of us, myself included, by his reverence for his parents' journey as immigrants. That journey, which was a pathway to freedom, that journey which settled into a grocery store, a corner grocery store, became the pulse of the American Dream for his family that was tethered

into this country called the United States of America. He never forgot that. He revered it. He was guided by it. The light that he brought to his field of politics was immense, and it was driven by fairness and inclusion.

So this evening, it is an honor to join with my colleagues to speak to a humble man, a great individual, who, with his wife alongside him, Matilda, brought to this State of New York a sense of hope when there was despair.

As was said at the funeral, he will continue to live. His voice may have been silenced, but his integrity, his spirit, and his principles will long live in the lives of those who struggle and reach to America, to her government, for a better tomorrow.

May he rest in peace.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I ask the gentleman from Brooklyn and from Queens, Mr. JEFFRIES, for his comments.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Queens, for anchoring this Special Order hour and for yielding a few moments for me to reflect on the passing of our great Governor, Mario Cuomo.

Mr. Speaker, like many other members of the New York delegation, I also served in the New York State Assembly. But unlike most, I didn't get the opportunity to serve alongside Governor Mario Cuomo. I arrived several years after he had completed his three terms in office.

So I speak today not from the perspective of someone who served in government alongside Mario Cuomo, but as a young man who grew up in Mario Cuomo's New York. What an opportunity to be able to come of age in the 1980s with a Governor, a leader, who articulated such an eloquent vision of equal protection under the law for everyone. What an opportunity to be able to come of age under a Governor who believed in opportunity for everyone, who recognized that New York State's greatest strength was our diversity from every community, every perspective, and every religious background.

It was great to be able to come of age and look up at a Governor who, notwithstanding the political potential pitfalls, stood on principle, was ahead of his time as it relates to his firm opposition to the death penalty at a time when that was not a popular position to take. He was a great leader, a charismatic intellectual, a wonderful family man, a tremendous lawyer, and a wonderful statesman and Governor.

I can only imagine that when Mario Cuomo arrived up in Heaven he was prepared to get to work. But I think that there was probably a greeting committee that was there at the gates of Heaven, one of whom was FDR, a former Governor of the State of New York, the other of whom was FDR's cousin, Teddy Roosevelt, two former great Governors of the State of New York. And I think they probably ushered

Mario Cuomo to a place in front of the throne of glory where Almighty God Himself may have said to Governor Cuomo:

Listen, you can take your suit off and put this robe on. Governor Cuomo, you can rest now. You have been faithful over a few things. You can rest now. Well done, My good and faithful servant, well done.

Mr. CROWLEY. Well done, my friend from Brooklyn and Queens.

Mr. Speaker, I now would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Flushing, Queens, New York, Ms. GRACE MENG.

Ms. MENG. Thank you to the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker. Governor Mario Cuomo's legacy is important for all of us to remember here in Congress. Although the late Governor Cuomo is most well known nationally as an eloquent orator and bastion of liberalism, he first received public attention for his career creatively merging the values of social justice and access to affordable housing while protecting family values in my home borough of Queens.

Governor Cuomo's life is a personal inspiration as he was also raised in Queens and born to immigrant parents. Perhaps it was this background that allowed him to regard himself as a progressive pragmatist who upheld the idea that government should be a positive source for good.

This is best seen through Governor Cuomo's advocacy for an activist government that provides shelter for the homeless, work for the idle, and care for the elderly and infirm even in times of austerity. This belief in a dynamic government met some opposition, but Governor Cuomo recognized the crucial safety net and that government investment is the foundation for a strong economy, an understanding that is imperative in today's political and economic climate.

As a mom of two young children, I am particularly touched by his launching of the Decade of the Child to enact educational and health care reforms affecting children. He deeply understood that improving children's lives ultimately betters our communities and empowers our future. Under his leadership, New York was the very first State to enact seatbelt laws, and today we continue focusing on making sure that children's toys and car seats are safe and effective. This academic year, New York City implemented universal pre-K, a concept that the late-Governor Mario Cuomo championed and the current Governor Andrew Cuomo aptly budgeted for success.

I believe in what Hubert Humphrey said:

The moral test of a government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

I think that Hubert Humphrey would have found Governor Cuomo to be a

strong, moral leader and, like the rest of us, would have mourned the loss of an inspired beacon of progressive ideology.

I join my colleagues today from the New York delegation in sending condolences and sympathy to the entire Cuomo family, and know that Governor Cuomo's respected legacy will be a blessing to us all.

Mr. CROWLEY. I thank the gentle lady for her remarks. I thank all the members of the New York delegation, as well as Ms. PELOSI, the Democratic leader, for their remarks today and remembrance of the great Governor of the State of New York, Mario Cuomo.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity at the early age of 15 years of age to be engaged in, really, my first political campaign. My then-Uncle Walter Crowley, who was one of my political idols in life, along with a fellow by the name of Michael Dowd, were in charge of a portion of Queens County in terms of making sure that, I think, the Catholic vote came out for Mario Cuomo during the 1977 race for mayor of New York, which was famously won in that primary by Ed Koch. But that was not the only election that Mario Cuomo—and storied election—that Mario Cuomo was a part of. He had been a part of elections before that, and, lo and behold, in 1982 he once again found himself in a matchup between himself and Ed Koch, and Mario Cuomo prevailing in that statewide election.

At 15 years of age, I remember handing out literature at the churches in western Queens and southern Queens, and it really was my entree into a political life. Then, in 1984, as a student at Queens College, I interned in the office of then-Governor Cuomo. And what an experience that was to be working with Bob Sullivan, his storied pollster, but officially, on the official side, was working in the statistics office with Dick Starkey, a former reporter, a storied reporter in New York City; Marty Steadman; to have Tim Russert walk into the room. We all died because Tim Russert just walked into the room.

I can remember in 1986 when I was elected to the State assembly how supportive Mario Cuomo was to me as a young man, recommending me to travel around the world with ACYPL, to come here to Washington to get my feet wet as well, to get that Washington sense. I remember being on the second floor in 1988 in the Blue Room, what is known as the Blue Room where the Governor would give his budgets, anticipating his delving into, diving into the 1988 Presidential elections, only to have my heart broken when Mario Cuomo said he would not run in that election.

Mario Cuomo was tough. He had one of the biggest hearts I have ever come to know.

He had also gone to law school, my Uncle Walter, and there was an intimacy between the Crowleys and the Cuomo family in Queens County politics, one that exists to this day with

his son Andrew, as Governor, and my family as well.

Mario Cuomo always did the right thing. He always did the right thing. And Mario Cuomo had an incredible magnetism about him. I have never seen, outside of people who are Presidents of the United States, the kind of magnetic sense that Mario Cuomo emitted. People wanted to be around him. Whenever he was publicly out, he was walking in the street or at an event, it was hard to get near Mario Cuomo because everyone wanted to be around Mario Cuomo.

I was always nervous around Mario Cuomo, a healthy nervousness, but I was excited to be around him. I always wanted to be around him. I loved the man. I loved him dearly, although I never had enough time to be with him. As PAUL TONKO had said at the funeral—and what a beautiful funeral Mario Cuomo had, what an incredibly beautiful funeral—simple, yet elegant. That is how I describe it. His son Andrew and his entire family, how respectful they were of their father. And I think of the people who attended that funeral had to walk away knowing that these children, all of them, were raised so well: Andrew, Margaret, Madeline, Maria, and Christopher. And all their grandchildren, how they behaved. It was just remarkable, just wonderful to see the respect they had for their father and their grandfather, for their in-law.

But Andrew had said that his father told him you don't tell people what they want to hear—and I am paraphrasing. He told them you tell them what they need to hear. You told them what you wanted to tell them, the message you wanted to get across.

It wasn't always popular, the message of Mario Cuomo; but I do know that people, even when they disagreed with him, they respected him and they admired him because of his tenacity, because he believed in what he was saying.

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I think what they respected about him was he was always consistent as well in his thoughts. We will miss Mario Cuomo. Queens County, his home borough, will miss him. The city of New York and the State of New York, and, I think, the country have lost a great statesman, someone who didn't look to the next election but looked to the next great issue that needed to be tackled, not only in New York, because New York in many respects is the leader of State legislators in the country; he was thinking nationally, he was thinking globally as well.

Mario Cuomo will forever be one of my heroes, as is Lincoln. Mario Cuomo was bipartisan. He loved Lincoln, a Republican, but was true to his own democratic principles and his party as well. There is not enough time to say everything about him. But, Mr. Speaker, I once again want to thank the delegation for their loyalty this evening

and being here for as long as they were, and the indulgence of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

OPPOSING RAPPROCHEMENT WITH CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so humbled and pleased to see my colleagues who have turned out tonight at this late hour in a bipartisan manner to say that we reject the President's ill-advised treatment of the policy of rapprochement with the Cuban regime, and no one is better able and better equipped to talk about freedom and democracy and our fight for justice than Mr. CHABOT.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and chairman of the House Small Business Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join with my colleague and friend, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN, in opposition to the December 17 announcement by President Obama to change U.S. policy toward Cuba. We will also be joined by some of our other colleagues, and I want to particularly thank Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for her leadership on all issues regarding Cuba. She has been a leader on this issue for a long, long time and will continue to be, I am sure.

This policy change was a unilateral decision made without consulting Congress and with complete disregard of long-term national security consequences. Similarly, the so-called prisoner exchange was terribly flawed.

In 2013, Secretary Kerry stated that swapping convicted Cuban spies for Alan Gross was off the table, testifying before Congress that since Mr. Gross was wrongly imprisoned, there was no equivalency to pursue a spy for spy tradeoff. Let us be clear: the freedom of Alan Gross is welcome news, but this exchange was totally one-sided. It was tragically flawed. It was not in the best interest of the people of the United States, and it was not in the best interest of the people of Cuba.

As my colleague, Representative ROS-LEHTINEN, has rightly highlighted these past few weeks since the decision and the prisoner exchange occurred, Cuban spies have been responsible for the deaths of American lives. It is absolutely true that they have been. And they have been released. Those are the people who were responsible for American deaths. Cuban patriots who have risked their lives every day to fight for basic rights and freedoms feel betrayed.

The exchange was flawed. The policy itself is flawed, and the announcement