## TRIBUTE TO KENNETH AND PHYLLIS SHIELDS

### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kenneth and Phyllis Shields of Farragut, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1950.

Kenneth and Phyllis' lifelong commitment to each other and their children truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Shields' that make me proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 65th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

## TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL L. JACKSON

### HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Russell L. Jackson, Jr. for his many years of service to Anderson Township.

Russ Jackson has a long history of public service to Anderson Township, making invaluable contributions to its economic development throughout the last 20 years.

With over 37 years of business experience in the transportation industry, including leadership as a CEO and small business owner, Russ's input on the Anderson Township Board of Trustees has been invaluable. For five elected terms, Russ has used his business acumen to help steer Anderson Township towards economic success.

Due in part to Russ's leadership, Anderson Township has experienced sustained economic growth. More and more families are choosing to call Anderson Township home and more businesses are deciding to conduct their business in the township.

As admirable as the service Russ has provided to his community is the attitude with which he has served. Russ has worked tirelessly to improve Anderson Township over the years, devoted to the big picture and listening to the people he serves without exception.

I am grateful to have a fellow citizen in southwest Ohio as committed to service and progress as Russ Jackson is. Congratulations, Russ, on your 20 years of public service, and I wish you the best in all future endeavors.

## RECOGNIZING CAREPAYMENT AND BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

### HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge Beacon Health System in my district for their collaboration with CarePayment.

Beacon Health System continues to look for new, innovative ways to care for their patients.

They have partnered with CarePayment to provide a financing service that allows patients to spread out the payment of medical bills.

Oftentimes, patients face sticker shock when they discover what their out-of-pocket medical expenses will ultimately cost.

Some plans with high deductibles force patients to pay $6,000 for an individual plan, or $12,000 for a family plan before their health insurance kicks in to cover medical bills.

In order to provide more financial relief to patients in my district, Beacon Health and CarePayment are now providing a patient-friendly, financing program.

Everyone is eligible, regardless of income or employment status, and participating in this program has no impact on the patient's credit score.

The constituents I serve are concerned with rising medical costs.

In fact, many of them face difficult decisions when it comes to prioritizing their healthcare.

I am grateful for partnerships like the one between Beacon Health and CarePayment for providing patient driven solutions to Hoosiers.

I will keep working on bipartisan reforms to move in this direction.

## COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 10, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4188, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015.

H.R. 4188 authorizes the United States Coast Guard, a critical component of the Department of Homeland Security, through fiscal year 2017 at $8.7 billion per year. The bill includes provisions aimed at improving Coast Guard mission effectiveness, modernizing the Service's aging vessels and other assets, and reforming U.S. maritime transportation laws.

Since our Nation's earliest years, the Coast Guard has kept our ports and waterways secure, protected our shores and coastal communities, and responded to disasters and other emergencies. As Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I recognize and thank the men and women of the Coast Guard for their work, particularly their efforts at fulfilling the Coast Guard's critical homeland security missions. I am pleased to support legislation that reauthorizes the Coast Guard to ensure that it is positioned to effectively execute its eleven vital statutory homeland security and non-homeland security missions.

Modernizing the Coast Guard's aircraft, vessels, and other technology is critical to its operations. H.R. 4188 includes provisions that seek to improve the Service's acquisition process and improve the quality of assets delivered. The bill also requires the Department of Homeland Security to develop and present to Congress a strategic plan for the Coast Guard's long-term acquisition and manpower needs. This requirement will go a long way to enhancing both the DHS and Congress' understanding and prioritization of Coast Guard capability needs.

In addition, H.R. 4188 directs the Coast Guard to have a new manpower requirements plan that assesses all projected mission requirements for the next four fiscal years; the number of personnel available currently and projected; capability gaps caused by a lack of available personnel; and the steps the Coast Guard will take to address these gaps. In carrying out this requirement, it is important that the Coast Guard take into account the need to foster greater diversity at all levels of the organization. Consistently deploying broad recruitment efforts can only strengthen the Coast Guard.

Congress must continue to ensure these brave men and women have the necessary authorities and resources to accomplish all that they do on behalf of our Nation. H.R. 4188 is a good step in that direction, and I congratulate my colleagues in moving this important legislation forward.

## CONGRATULATING ANDREW MEKELBURG

### HON. JOHN KLINE

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Andrew Mekelburg, Vice President of Government Affairs, upon his upcoming retirement after more than 36 years with Verizon and its preceding companies.

Andy began his career with Bell Atlantic and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of D.C. Originally from Needham, Massachusetts, Andy came to Washington to attend Georgetown University, where he majored in accounting and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. He also earned a Master of Science in Special Studies of Telecommunications Policy from George Washington University.

At the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone (C&P) Company he supervised a team processing telephone bill payments. Andy next served as a Supervisor and then Manager in Corporate Accounting before becoming a Manager of External Affairs, State Regulatory, Financial and Accounting Matters at Bell Atlantic, the parent company of C&P.

From 1991 to 1992, Andy was a Brookings Institution Congressional Fellow assigned to serve in then-Congressman Amory ''Amo'' Houghton's (NY) office. During his fellowship, Andy founded a coalition of community leaders and worked with them to develop and implement economic development activities, including the Western New York Tourism Coalition, throughout the congressional district. He also initiated and founded HealthNet, one of the first Telemedicine networks in the nation, which was comprised of twelve rural and urban hospitals and a number of technology companies that worked together to use telecommunications technologies to solve health care challenges.

After his fellowship concluded, Andy served as Director of Infrastructure Initiatives for Bell Atlantic. In that capacity, he worked with the General Services Administration, the Vice President's National Performance Review, and the City of Hagerstown, Maryland, to establish the first Federal Telecommuting Center in the Washington area. He also continued to initiate