

but overwhelmingly, with well over 180 votes, in my view, we would support.

I give that information, Mr. Speaker, to the majority leader so that he will know that in the event we have not responded in the CR that I believe the Senate-passed legislation incorporated into a House bill and brought to the floor can pass on suspension and may well even be able to pass on unanimous consent. I don't know that that is the case, but it certainly could pass on suspension. I would urge him to consider that as an alternative available to us to respond so that we do not have the situation which we had in July of leaving town for 7 weeks without having addressed this crisis that confronts the health of our people.

Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that we have a number of other pieces of legislation that I would last like to ask the majority leader about. There are rumors that our schedule is going to be over in the next few weeks. I don't know. The Senate was planning on going presumably to the first week of October. I don't know that they are going to do that. We are planning to go to the end of September.

There are a number of other pieces of legislation which I think need to be addressed. We continue to be very concerned about our failure to respond to the Flint crisis. The mayor of Flint was in my office yesterday. They are still drinking bottled water because the water in their pipes that is being delivered to their homes is still unfit for human consumption unless a filter is in place and unless that filter is working efficiently and effectively. We really need to, I think, help on that.

With respect to opioids, we passed a piece of legislation that was, Mr. Speaker, a bipartisan piece of legislation. We continue to believe, however, the resources to carry out the policies included in the authorizing bill need to be addressed.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker—I mentioned this before—we continue to urge that in light of the scourge of gun violence in America that we take up two bills sponsored by the former chairman, Republican chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security. They are not Democratic bills, although Democrats support the bills and are cosponsors of the bill, but they are PETER KING's bills to provide greater safety.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have adopted the premise that background checks are a good thing. We require background checks. The problem is, we don't require background checks in every instance of a transfer of a weapon from seller to buyer. The problem with that, of course, is if you want to buy a gun for a nefarious purpose, one would assume you are not going to go and have your background checked. You will find some other way to purchase that gun. We would hope that bill would be brought to the floor.

The second bill that Mr. KING has, of course, seems to us to be a very reasonable piece of legislation, which simply

says, if you are judged too dangerous to fly on our airplanes, you ought to be too dangerous as well to buy weapons to injure people in our country; we think you are too dangerous to go on an airplane and that you might injure people in that fashion.

I would urge, Mr. Majority Leader, Mr. Speaker, before we leave before the election, two things, that we bring those to the floor and we carry out—and I want to repeat again because I think it is important. Speaker PAUL RYAN said on October 29, 2015, just a year ago: "We will not duck the tough issues; we will take them head on . . . we should not hide our disagreements. We should embrace them. We have nothing to fear from honest disagreements honestly stated."

Mr. Speaker, I share that view. I think the bills that I have mentioned—Flint, opioids, gun violence, and certainly Zika, and, yes, there are others—ought to be brought to this floor, and the House ought to work its will. I would hope that in the next few days that are available to us that the majority leader, Mr. Speaker, gives careful consideration to bringing those pieces of legislation to the floor.

In the gun violence case, the polls reflect that over 85 percent—and in one case over 90 percent—of Americans support those pieces of legislation. They would pass, Mr. Speaker, overwhelmingly. The only reason they haven't passed—the only reason they haven't passed—contrary to the statement that we will not duck the tough issues, said by Speaker RYAN just about a year ago, the only reason they haven't passed is because they have not been brought to the floor. I would urge, Mr. Speaker, the majority leader consider that.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for his advice.

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

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016, TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, September 19, 2016, and that the order of the House of January 5, 2016, regarding morning-hour debate not apply on that day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

REMEMBERING THE LATE HONORABLE MARK TAKAI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

have 5 days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, we are holding this Special Order today to honor our colleague and friend, Mark Takai. Many of our colleagues are here to share their own memories and remembrances of our friend.

In Hawaii, the word "aloha" holds a very special place in our hearts. It is a word that we use every day to say hello and good-bye, but, in saying that word, we are actually conveying a much deeper meaning. In the deepest and truest sense of the word, aloha means I come to you with an open heart and offer you my deepest respect, love, and care. It is a word that describes a way of life. Living aloha brings people together regardless of their unique backgrounds or things like age, race, religion, or social class.

This open heart, this spirit of aloha, is what I think of when I think of my colleague, my fellow soldier, and my friend, Mark Takai, because he carried this aloha spirit with him wherever he went. He shared it with everyone that he came into contact with.

During a celebration of Mark's life held in his hometown of Pearl City on Oahu just a few weeks ago—this is the community that he served for over 20 years as a State legislator—I heard from one of Mark's high school teachers named Mike, who shared her amazement that not only was Mark a great student, not only was he an all-American swimmer, but he would spend his free time doing things like organizing voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote parades in his neighborhood, encouraging his community to make sure that their voice was heard.

As a student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Mark was a leader among his peers, one of whom is here today, our colleague, Congresswoman TAMMY DUCKWORTH. He served as president of the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, was a champion on the varsity team for 4 years, and was editor in chief of the campus newspaper, Ka Leo O Hawaii.

I recently had an intern in my district office who is a part of ASUH, and he told me about how the University of Hawaii student government members today tell stories of the legends of Mark Takai's courage and leadership as student president, taking on difficult issues like sexual harassment and assault, resulting in his being sued by the University of Hawaii professors union. But no matter the challenge, the difficulty, or the obstacle, the legends are true; Mark Takai never backed down.

At age 27, he was elected to the Hawaii State House of Representatives, representing his hometown of Pearl

City and neighboring Aiea from 1994 to 2014. In 2002, I was elected to the State House where I first got to know him, learning of his commitment and passion for the University of Hawaii, and his and Sami's love for all things Disney, showing me the memorabilia they brought home from the Disney parks they visited around the world, and sharing copies of the cookbook he distributed throughout his Pearl City district, always making time, always ready with a helpful tip and a helping hand.

In 2014, after a hard-fought campaign, Mark came here and joined us in Congress, representing the First Congressional District of Hawaii. While here, he served on the Committee on Armed Services, as well as the Committee on Small Business, working hard always, putting first and foremost his constituents. Even after he was diagnosed and going through treatment, he was always there attending his committee hearings, doing things that no one really expected he would do.

I was amazed, during our annual NDAA marathon markup session that often lasts over 16 straight hours, Mark was there in the wee hours of the morning passing out the Hawaii-made chocolate macadamia nuts to our colleagues.

For 17 years, while simultaneously fulfilling his responsibilities as an elected official, Mark also served as a citizen soldier in the Hawaii Army National Guard, where he earned the rank of lieutenant colonel, deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and served as president of the Hawaii Army National Guard Association. Because Mark had a master's degree in public health, he came into the National Guard as a direct commissioned officer. What this meant in practical terms was he didn't have to go through basic combat training or OCS.

□ 1100

When I came back to Hawaii from my basic training in South Carolina, I was assigned to our medical command, the same unit as Mark. He was a first lieutenant. I was a private first class. As I was rendering him a salute, he would joke around, asking me to teach him how to render a proper salute and how to march in a formation because he never got to learn those through basic training.

Mark was incredibly proud to wear the uniform. He was deeply committed to the National Guard, extremely active with the National Guard Association both in Hawaii and here in Washington, always looking to find ways to support the institution and its service to our soldiers and airmen in Hawaii and across the country.

I have heard from so many of Mark's soldiers and peers in the Hawaii Guard who express disbelief that he is actually gone and how much they truly valued the time they spent with him and served with him.

Mark's service to Hawaii and our Nation spans nearly a quarter century. His legacy of aloha and his commitment to service touched the lives of so many people along the way.

All of the stories and remembrances we will hear today I think capture the essence of Mark, his heart for service, his spirit of aloha, his love for God, his love for his family, and caring and sharing aloha with everyone.

To our colleagues here today to share their memories of Mark, thank you for opening your hearts as we honor and remember and say aloha to our dear friend.

To Mark's staff, thank you for being strong, for serving Mark and our State of Hawaii, and continuing to serve the people of Hawaii through this difficult time.

Finally, I would like to recognize Mark's family, who have just arrived here in the gallery. I would like to recognize Mark's wife, Sami; his children, Matthew and Kaila; his parents, Erik and Naomi; and his siblings, Nadine, Nikki, and Ross, all of whom have been incredibly generous in sharing their time and opening their family to all of us, to people across the State of Hawaii, and yesterday during the beautiful and historic service that was held in Mark's honor.

I want you to know that you were always with him wherever he went. He was always speaking about you proudly. You were the light of his life.

Mahalo, Mark, for the lasting impact that you had on all of us, for sharing your aloha with us, and for dedicating your life to the service of others.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GRAHAM).

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for loaning me her lei and hosting this Special Order in honor of our colleague and friend, the late Congressman Mark Takai of Hawaii.

I was fortunate to develop a very close friendship with Mark, as we were part of the same freshman class elected in 2014, and sat next to each other on the House Armed Services Committee.

In the panhandle of Florida, the area I represent, we have an attitude toward life we call "The North Florida Way." It means we care about public service, we take care of our neighbors, and we do what is right. And even though the panhandle is about 5,000 miles from Hawaii, The North Florida Way is a lot like the aloha spirit.

As we have learned here today, Congressman Takai embodies the aloha spirit. As a public servant, he stands as a role model for all of us. He first ran for public office at 27 years old, and served 10 years in the Hawaii House of Representatives before coming to Congress. At the same time, he was also serving in the Hawaii National Guard, where, over 17 years, he earned the rank of lieutenant colonel and served in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mark cared about his neighbors, representing the people of his State with distinction, and always cared about

those around him, as a father, a husband, a friend, and a colleague. Sitting next to him in committee, he would always greet me with a smile and a warm aloha. He cared about doing what was right, especially for his fellow servicemembers in the military.

As we remember Congressman Takai today, I hope we all continue to honor his memory and aloha spirit throughout the end of our own service. Let's all honor him by practicing a little more of the aloha spirit every day.

Let's remember to represent our constituents, to care about each other, and to do what is right. That is what Mark always did, and that is what he would want us to do.

Mark was a role model for us all, in and out of Congress. Our thoughts, prayers, and love are with his family.

Ms. GABBARD. I yield to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and celebrate the life of my good friend, Congressman Mark Takai of Hawaii.

Mark was a fierce advocate for the people of Hawaii and was a champion of issues important to the AAPI community. Prior to his two decades as a representative in the Hawaii State House, Mark briefly lived in Guam, my home, and attended school there, which helped to inform his perspectives on the unique challenges affecting the territories.

Here in Congress, Mark was an embodiment of the aloha spirit. I worked with him on a number of issues impacting Guam, Hawaii, and the Pacific region. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I truly appreciated his insights and views, especially his experiences as lieutenant colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard.

Mark's passing creates a void in Congress that cannot be replaced, but his life and his legacy will forever live on in all of us who knew him and in the many public policies that he helped to enact to make life for all Americans better.

On behalf of the people of Guam, I extend my condolences to his wife, Sami; his children, Matthew and Kaila; and the entire Takai family.

Mark, you will be deeply missed. As we say in Guam: Un Dangkulo na Si Yu'os Ma'ase, Mark.

Ms. GABBARD. I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TED LIEU).

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about my friend, Mark Takai.

We came in last year in the freshman class together. Through various orientation events, my wife, Betty, and our children had the honor of getting to know Mark's family, Sami, Matthew, and Kaila. Having gone to his beautiful memorial ceremonies in Hawaii and here, we had the honor of meeting Mark's extended family. The grace and dignity with which they have handled this has been tremendous.

I want to talk a little bit about Mark. He was a joy to be around. He

was warm, he was happy, he was energetic, and he exemplifies the best of America. Having served in our Armed Forces, serving the State legislature and here in Congress, he always tried his best to represent Americans and do what he thought was best.

I know we all dearly miss Mark. I know that when he said he is going to be fine and is going to be in heaven, a smile comes to my face when I think about Mark looking down at all of us and how happy he would be to see us here today. We all miss him dearly.

Ms. GABBARD. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our esteemed minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for taking this Special Order hour.

We are all sad and lament the fact that an extraordinary human being was taken from us far too early. I tell my colleagues, this picture says it all: that wonderful, warm, accepting, engaging aloha smile that is represented in this picture of our colleague, Mark Takai.

I join my colleagues in celebrating and remembering a life well lived. Though he only served alongside us in this House for a short time, he made a big impact on us all with his kindness, his sincerity, and his intellect. All of us admired the steadfastness with which he fought for his constituents and the courage with which he fought his illness. All of us saw Mark on this floor, determined to serve his constituents for as long as his health allowed him to do so.

As was said yesterday, Mark did not greet us with any self-pity or any wringing of hands, but with a positive attitude to the end. I wasn't with him at the very end, but my, how we were blessed to be with him for the short time that we had him. What an example he set for all of us to overcome adversity and welcome opportunities rather than focusing on that which he could not do.

Not only was Mark an outstanding Member of Congress, he was, as has been said by his fellow officer, a warrior willing to serve, to risk, and to save this great country, its democracy, and its people.

As a lieutenant colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard, he deployed on Active Duty to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He earned the Army's Meritorious Service Medal for his achievements there.

We all are standing here to speak of the meritorious service he gave right here. Yes, on the battlefield; yes, at the point of the spear; but right here as well. He drew on his experience in the Army as a veteran when he served as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs in the Hawaii legislature, and later as a member of the House Committee on Armed Services here in Congress.

A proud native of Hawaii, Mark dedicated his life and career to the people

of his beloved State. He was elected to the Hawaii House of Representatives at the age of 27. I can empathize with that because I was elected to the Maryland State Senate at the age of 27. We talked about that. Some have entered earlier, but that was pretty early. It gave us a great opportunity to serve.

Mark believed strongly that every child deserves a chance to learn in a safe and nurturing environment. In my own State, there are 52 Judy Centers named after my late wife, who died almost 20 years ago, that serve 3- and 4-year-old children.

Mark had that same kind of compassion and concern and focus on making sure that young people received all that we could give them early in life so that they could succeed later in life, as Mark Takai did so extraordinarily.

I have other words that I will submit for the RECORD because there are so many of my colleagues who want to speak about Mark and their relationship to him, their respect for him, their love for him, and his love for us.

I thank Congresswoman GABBARD for taking this hour, and I thank her for being such an example. Both of you define aloha.

God bless.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in remembering the life of our friend, Representative Mark Takai, who lost his battle against cancer in July.

Though he only served alongside us in this House for a short time, he made a big impact on us all with his kindness, his sincerity, and his intellect.

All of us admired the steadfastness with which he fought for his constituents and the courage with which he fought his illness.

Not only was Mark an outstanding member of Congress, he also served our nation in uniform.

As a lieutenant colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard, he deployed on active duty to Kuwait in support of operation Iraqi Freedom, and he earned the Army's Meritorious Service Medal for his achievements there.

He drew on his experiences in the Army and as a veteran when he served as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, and International Affairs in the Hawaii Legislature and later as a member of the House Committee on Armed Services here in Congress.

A proud native of Hawaii, Mark dedicated his life and career to the people of his beloved state.

Elected to the Hawaii House of Representatives at the age of twenty-seven, he spent two decades working hard to improve lives, strengthen communities, and bring jobs and opportunity to Hawaii. He championed education and fought for better schools.

Mark believed strongly that every child deserves a chance to learn in a safe and nurturing environment.

He stood up for Hawaii's veterans and worked to combat homelessness among those who were coming home from war.

Concerned about the dangers of climate change and rising sea levels, Mark did more than just support green energy through tax credits; he outfitted his own house with solar panels and drove an electric vehicle to show others how easy it is to live sustainably.

When Mark ran for Congress in 2014 and won, all of us believed he would be making a difference here in Washington for many, many years ahead.

He was one of those who loved being a legislator, who had the experience and talent to get things done in Congress.

All of us are deeply saddened that our country lost Mark at such a young age, with surely many great achievements ahead.

Losing a colleague is always difficult, but with Mark Takai it was more than that—we lost someone who had quickly become our friend, someone as warm as he was dependable, as jovial as he was wise.

My thoughts continue to be with Mark's wife Sami and their two children, Matthew and Kaila.

My heart goes out to them and to the people of Hawaii's first District he served so ably.

I also offer my condolences again to Senators SCHATZ and HIRONO and Representative TULSI GABBARD, Mark's colleagues in the Hawaii Congressional delegation, who worked closely with him every day.

We will miss him dearly in the halls of Congress, and I thank Representative GABBARD for leading the effort to pay tribute to him in the United States House of Representatives today.

□ 1115

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mahalo to my colleague from Hawaii, Congresswoman GABBARD, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, on July 20, the world lost a kind man, this Congress lost a great leader, and many of us here lost a very dear friend.

I didn't expect to have this welling of emotion.

Mark Takai represented everything America wants in a public servant. He was selfless, he was humble, and he was passionate about strengthening his community and protecting his country.

He served 17 years in the Hawaii National Guard, including a deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When he came home, he fought for the middle class and for the people of Hawaii.

He will be remembered by me and many of us here for his incredible spirit, which he bravely maintained through his illness. He will be remembered for his easy laugh, which brought joy to all those who knew him. And he spent a lifetime working to give a voice to those who struggled to be heard.

If I may depart from my prepared remarks for a moment, I remember going to Hawaii for his unofficial swearing-in in Honolulu with Leader PELOSI, and just seeing the outpouring of support from the people who elected him and the great hope in such a new young leader from the State of Hawaii, which has been going through great changes.

Getting to know him here and watching him, the losses that I feel are just that he was so full of potential. He loved Congress. He loved serving. He loved the potential to change this institution into a better place. He

reached out to Republicans, not a mean bone in his body.

I hesitate to say this last part because I can't say the name of the restaurant that we both went to in Southeast, in that part of town, but it serves double-fried Korean chicken wings, and he thanked me very much that we could share it. He loved food.

I feel very lucky to have called him a friend. I will miss him very much.

Thank you. Mahalo to you, Mark Takai, for having been my friend.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR).

Mr. AGUILAR. Mahalo, Ms. GABBARD. I appreciate the gentlewoman from Hawaii yielding to me to talk about my colleague and my friend Mark Takai.

As I stand here in aloha attire, I am sure my colleague would admire my dress, yet shake his head at my tie. We do love our rules here in Congress, but even the Speaker acknowledged yesterday that Mark continually talked with him about the need to embrace the aloha spirit and to maybe, just maybe, relax our rules occasionally.

Like many in our class, I met Mark during freshman orientation in December of 2014, when we were both elected. Instantly, all of us gravitated to him. He was easy to love.

As I reflect on the impact that he had on me, I am struck by four key things that you will continue to hear my colleagues share in their stories.

First was his pleasant attitude, demeanor, smile, and his full-hearted laugh. He had a deep concern for his colleagues, even as he battled his illness. I can't tell you the number of times he would sit right up here and we would talk about the bills and the issues of the day, and I would try to say something to make him laugh, and he would give that big smile and that full-throated laugh. He took a lot of pride in that. I am not sure there is anyone in this Chamber who didn't enjoy spending time with Mark. He was just that special.

Second was his pride in Hawaii and of his service in the military. Mark's eyes never got bigger than when I told him that my wife, Alisha, and I were going to attend the 70th anniversary ceremony in Hawaii aboard the USS *Missouri*, with a bipartisan delegation led by Mr. FORBES. He was so happy that I would get an opportunity to meet Admiral Harris, but also to see Oahu and to enjoy its beauty.

He was the best mayor Oahu never had is the reality of the situation. Whether it was restaurants, beaches, hiking trails, military installations, he always had a suggestion of something you should see and do.

We have to go—again, we can't say the restaurant names. You have to go to “blank,” and he would tell you the restaurant's name that started with a Z and he said was the President's favorite. And that turned into: Let's go there right now. And so Sami and

Alisha and I, we went to this restaurant that is unique to Hawaii that Mark said was the President's favorite. When you walked in with Mark, you were bound to be recognized because he knew everybody; and you were going to eat whatever he said, as well.

Third was how driven and competitive he was. Don't take that smile and that laugh to mean that he was a pushover. He was absolutely driven to represent his region and to do his job effectively. He would quiz me on the politics of my district, asking me questions about my race and giving me advice. He would talk about his own race and races in the past, and it was clear that he wasn't a pushover when it came to politics and fighting for his communities.

But he always had a plan, and that wasn't ever more evident than when he stayed on the floor just about the entire day, State of the Union Day 2015, to get a prime seat for the State of the Union. I still have the photo—I looked at it last night—of him directly behind Leader PELOSI. She was next to Whip HOYER, and he is beside JOHN LEWIS. Mark was a freshman, sitting right there within camera-shot, wearing his lei, and he wanted everyone back home to know he had arrived. It was brilliant.

The last point was about his family. He truly loved his family and his faith. As fathers spending a significant amount of time away from our two kids, we talked about them often, how proud we were of them, how much we missed them, and how we used technology to try to fill the void in communication. Attending weekend sporting events for swimming and soccer for Matthew and Kaila, even if it meant traveling and being home for only 30 hours, he wanted to do it. He wanted to be there. He wanted to be present.

Your dad loved you so, so much, and he talked about you so, so often.

Sami, I don't know how you do it. But he would comment on that. He would look at me, and we would be huddled in the back back there, and he would say: We wouldn't be able to do anything without our wives. And I said: Yeah, of course. We know that. He says: No, no, no. I mean you should know that. You should send a text message or something to Alisha right now.

We spent a relatively short amount of time with him here in Washington, D.C., but he touched our lives and was a source of strength and humor. I will always remember his spirit, his faith, and his commitment to his community.

Aloha, friend.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our leader.

Ms. PELOSI. What a beautiful picture of Mark.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman GABBARD for bringing us together in this Special Order to salute a very special person, our colleague, Mark Takai.

It is a solemn privilege for all of us today to give voice to the sorrow of the

U.S. Congress at the passing of our colleague and dear friend. We have lost someone truly special, a person who held the respect and friendship of colleagues on both sides of the aisle, on both sides of the Capitol, up and down Pennsylvania Avenue.

In fact, the President himself paid tribute to Mark when he died. He said: “Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Representative Mark Takai.

“Mark was always a fighter,” the President said. “It's the spirit he brought to more than two decades of public service on behalf of the people of Hawaii.

“He stood up for America's most vulnerable. He championed our troops and veterans, and proudly wore our Nation's uniform. And his relentless push for cancer research inspired countless Americans fighting the same battle as him.

“Simply put, our country is better off,” the President said, “our country is better off because of Mark's contributions. He leaves a legacy of courage, of service, and of hope.”

Michelle and he said: “Our thoughts and prayers are with Mark's wife, Sami, their two children, and many friends and family.”

Many of the friends and family are here today: Sami, of course; Matthew and Kaila; his parents, Mark's parents, Erik and Naomi; his sister, Nadine; her husband, Ronnie, and daughter Nelani; his sister, Nikki; his brother, Ross; his father-in-law, Gary Kai; and all of the people of Hawaii who may be watching this, certainly all of our colleagues.

He was effective from the start, I think, because he was such an experienced legislator. 20 years in the Hawaii Legislature, and that made him, with his energy and as our colleague, Mr. AGUILAR said, his competitiveness.

Who but a competitive soul, and an imaginative one, would be bringing leis—I guess it is lei, singular is plural—to Selma to match what happened in the sixties, when Martin Luther King and our colleague JOHN LEWIS wore leis in the march. And who but he would, only a few weeks in Congress, decide that all these hundreds of lei would be sent from Hawaii for people to wear on the 50th anniversary of Selma.

As I said yesterday in Statuary Hall, many of the Members were thinking, “Why didn't I think of that?” but that is how Mark was. I don't want to say competitive, but nonetheless.

As far as his seating here, Mr. AGUILAR, I was privileged to appoint him as a part of the escort committee. Because of the President's origins in Hawaii, I wanted Hawaii to be represented on the escort committee; but as you said, he exploited the opportunity, and we were glad that he did.

I really wish that he were here, but I wish that everyone could have seen him on our codel to Asia. Congresswoman MATSUI did, and others. We were in Burma, Cambodia, Korea,

Japan, Vietnam. We began in California, came to Hawaii to be briefed at the Pacific Command, to go on to Asia and then come back through Alaska.

Now, here he was, a relatively new Member of Congress. This was like April of last year. He was in Congress maybe 3, 4 months, but he was on the Armed Services Committee, so he spoke with great authority because this was a security trip as well as a values, human rights trip and our economic interests trip.

So I said to him—getting back to Mr. AGUILAR—I said to him: We are going to begin in California with some briefings, and then we will go to Hawaii, and then you will preside as we meet with the Pacific Command. So would you like to join us in California?

He said: Would I like to join you in California? I could be home with Sami. I could have a night with Sami or I could be with all of you in California. I will meet you in Hawaii.

It was very clear that any chance he got he wanted to be with his family.

Certainly he, again, was part of the delegation. Only a few months in Congress, with such dignity, we forgot that he was a new Member of Congress. With great knowledge of our national security, with great diplomacy in how he conveyed his thoughts, and every place he went, he was beautifully received. I wish all of you could have seen how, especially in Japan, where they took special interest to embrace him as a Japanese American Member of Congress.

□ 1130

Everything he did, he did with excellence. He died as he had lived: loved and surrounded by family and friends, with great dignity and great courage. He used his time well—used his time well—and, again, understood what the opportunity of serving in Congress was, and he made an honorable contribution. His service here brought luster to the Congress.

It is a privilege to call him colleague for all of us, and an even bigger privilege to call him friend. In the Hawaiian way of family, he has bound us together. We are all family. I hope that the Takai family knows that they have family always in the Congress of the United States.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN).

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of a truly good and humble man.

In the time I had the pleasure of knowing Mark, I was able to call him not only a colleague, but also, proudly, a friend.

Mark and I came to Congress in the same class almost 2 short years ago. Upon meeting Mark, I instantly knew that I had a new colleague that I could talk openly to, and I knew that he would always listen with an open mind. We also shared a mutual love and desire to serve our constituents who also

have so much in common, including a shared heritage.

Mark's heart was that of a public servant. Always willing to do whatever it took to best serve the people of Hawaii, Mark set an example for us all on how to put our communities above ourselves and serve for the betterment of everyone. This includes his service in the United States Army National Guard, during which time he served as a medical officer in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I want to express my deepest condolences to Mark's wife, Sami, his two children, Matthew and Kaila, and wish for them comfort during this difficult time. I know that they can take solace in the fact that Mark was a great man who will always be respected and revered not for what he did for himself, but what he did for others.

I am grateful for the opportunity to talk about my friend, Mark. He will be dearly missed.

I thank Representative GABBARD. God bless Mark, his family, and the United States.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE).

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Ms. GABBARD, for her very eloquent words yesterday. All the speakers did a remarkable job in a ceremony that was sad and poignant that really captured the spirit of who Mark was.

In the Hawaiian Islands, there is a word for family. Forgive my pronunciation—being from Pennsylvania—if I botch this, but I believe it is pronounced *ohana*. Ask anyone who lived or grew up there and they will tell you it is more than a word. It refers to not only your immediate family, but to extended family and beyond, even to strangers that you may not know. It is a very unique and strong bond amongst the Hawaiian people who live there.

I experienced that *ohana* firsthand when I met Mark and his family during our congressional orientation. Sami and my wife, Jenny, immediately bonded, as did Mark and I, and the way Matthew and Kaila played with our daughter, Abby.

I have many memories of that orientation and I actually was looking at a number of the pictures last night reflecting on Mark, reflecting on the ceremony yesterday, and preparing for today.

As Leader PELOSI pointed out, this picture of Mark really captures his warmth, his spirit, and the way he approached life. It inspires me, and I think all of us, to approach each and every day with a smile on our face no matter the difficulties of the moment or the seeming difficulties that in the larger scheme of things might not quite be as difficult or as important as we take them to be.

In this political crucible that we call Congress, Mark brought his personal sense of *ohana* to our body politic: his sense of understanding and willingness

to find compromise where there often seemed to be none, his sense of seeing you as a friend with differences to work out and not as an adversary or an enemy, and his commitment to making sure we all found the common ground that so often eludes us.

He was here a brief period of time, but he left his mark. Any of us may serve 2 years or 20 years or beyond. I don't think each of us, though, will be able to say that we have actually left our mark. I hope we will be able to. It can be said about Mark Takai in his short period here that he touched every single person who knew him.

I love you, Mark, and I miss you. I love his beautiful family.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL).

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman GABBARD for giving us this opportunity to say a few words about somebody whom we cared about and respected so much and who brought so much joy and positivity to this Congress.

To his family—to Sami, to Matthew, and to Kaila, thank you for sharing him with us. It meant a lot to us.

The Hawaiian word "*pono*" means righteousness. It is the idea that moral character leads to happiness. It means doing what is morally right and selfless. It is the word that so captures my feelings about Mark Takai, and that is what we see here in this picture.

Too often our society takes the notion of public service for granted. Mark was the embodiment of the idea of public service, an idea that he was so proud to take part in—first, in the military and, at the same time, also continuing on in government.

As I mentioned before in this House, Mark was a force of positivity. He was a leader who did not lead by force of will, but he led by being humble. He listened, he was effective at what he did, and he always brought us great warmth.

He was the embodiment of bravery first in his service to his Nation—our Nation—and then in his battle against cancer. His passing is a great loss to his family, to Hawaii, for this Chamber, and our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we have truly lost one of the good guys.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman GABBARD for scheduling this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, Mark was a special presence in the freshman class of the 114th Congress. He brought his Hawaiian cheer to every room he entered, and I got to enjoy this perhaps more than most because he was my fourth-floor Cannon hallmate.

Early on, Mark decided that as hallmates, our staffs should get together and break bread. A Hawaiian pizza party was born, and Mark burst in with a hearty aloha and bearing

gifts of chocolate-covered Macadamia nuts and Hawaiian coffee. He regaled the staff with a few good stories, and it always seems that he led with his island shirt, a lei, and an enormous smile wherever he went.

Our hearts are with Sami and the children. Mark will be sorely missed.

After Mark was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he was resolute, brave, and determined to do all possible to battle a very difficult disease. But months later, when it was clear that Mark was dying, he seemed different to me. He grieved for his children, for Sami, for his myriad friends, and perhaps especially for all that he wanted to accomplish here in the people's House.

We never know when our time will come, and Mark's life and death teaches us that we must make the most of each and every day. Mark Takai was a superlative role model and a beloved friend.

God bless you, Mark, and all your generations to come.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH).

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

Twenty-eight years—1988—that is how long I have known Mark. As long as I have known him, he always was the champion for the most vulnerable. We met at the University of Hawaii. He was the serious one—if you can imagine that—and focused.

At the Ka Leo O Hawaii student newspaper where he was editor, he investigated sexual harassment at a time when victims were routinely blamed and disbelieved. Perhaps that is not too hard to believe because even today that is happening, but almost 30 years ago, he stood up for the victims.

We were there watching him as he stood up and was sued by the very same union that later on became some of his biggest supporters for his stance on education. In fact, he brought millions back to Hawaii for education—work that took not months or years, but sometimes a decade of steady work.

He was worried about the education of our military children who must follow their servicemember parents from base to base. He wanted to make sure that they got good, continuous education and did not lose out because their parents were serving our Nation.

Mark had so many aspects to him. Some of it was funny, some of it was annoying, and some of it was so unique to him. But it was all part of what a great person—a great human being—he was.

I remember the months of emails and conversations we would have long distance—I was in Illinois and he was in Hawaii—when he was about to get his first Nissan LEAF. He was so proud he would get the very first one on the islands, and then his annoyance when the commanding general of the Hawaii National Guard got the first one and he got the second. I told him he was being

ridiculous, that it didn't matter, and that what he was doing was going to be good for the environment and the world regardless. I had no idea that I was opening the door for years and years of conversations with Mark where he would detail exactly how much wattage he had sold back to Hawaii Electric from the solar panels on his roof or how long he had been able to go without having to recharge his electric vehicle.

He was there when my husband convinced me that we should ourselves buy an electric vehicle and the conversations the two of them would have about how important it was. It tried even this progressive Democrat's patience.

But he was always also there for others. I think one of the greatest skills that Mark had was to get others to join him in his cause, whatever that was; to get others to come and help share the load, whatever the load needed to be. Every time I went to Hawaii, whether it was on a family vacation or just to visit my mom who, by the way, lived in Pearl City, his Hawaii district, he would say: "Tammy, I need you to do this. I need you to go to this middle school and talk to these kids. Tammy, I need you to come do this. I need you to go to the University of Hawaii. I want you to go to the memorial. We need to talk and be there for the family of this fallen servicemember. Do you remember your friend from the Hawaii Guard?" It was always: "Tammy, we have got something to do."

□ 1145

And do you know what? He made it so much fun that you always did anyway. You went, and you were better for it, Hawaii was better for it, and the constituency got the service of a man who was never, ever on vacation, who never stopped.

One of the things that I think you have heard from other folks here was just the pure joy of living that Mark had—all the meals that we would eat. He would show up, and you might just want to go get a sandwich someplace, but you were always off for an adventure for a new restaurant or a better place to eat.

It was actually at one of those unforgettable meals when he mentioned to me that he was interested in running for Congress. The minute he said it, I knew that I was on board because he was perfect for this House. He was perfect to be here to work on behalf of not just the people of Hawaii but for the people of the United States. He was audacious but gentle. He was crusading and firm. I couldn't think of anyone who belonged here more. He had planned to serve for years, decades, gaining seniority to serve Hawaii.

I miss him every day. He would sit in that seat over there next to me in my wheelchair. I don't sit there now. I stopped when he could no longer be here. It was too much to try to sit next to the empty seat where Mark would

sit. I would only go back when he was back here to vote.

Before his illness, we had planned to reserve adjacent military morale welfare recreation cabins at Barking Sands missile range for a joint family vacation. As he took a turn for the worse, he actually came up to me on this floor and said he was sorry, he was sorry that he couldn't keep our date with our families. The man was dying, and he was apologizing to me. That was Mark.

Even as he was fighting for his life, as he was working to secure the future for his two beloved children and the love of his life, he was concerned for others. He sat through the entire NDAA until 3:00 in the morning. When we were exhausted and tired and didn't think we could make it, there was Mark, fighting cancer, a big smile on his face, flashing a shaka to everyone.

I will treasure always one of our final trips together to Israel where we visited an Iron Dome battery together. Even as he was fighting for his life, he was concerned and working to ensure that the security of our Nation and our ally Israel was secure.

I am so glad he made it here and that he served. I am so glad that he made such a big difference in so many lives here. But that was Mark. From the time he was a young man to the day that he left us, he was about service to others. Thank you very much—mahalo nui loa—Mark, for being my friend, for showing me how to be a better person, and for showing me a better way to serve. I miss you. I will never forget you. Until we meet again—a hui kaa.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES).

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman GABBARD.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and the legacy of my colleague, Mark Takai. I first met Mark when we were elected together. We were freshmen, and we were going through orientation. All of us were competing for staff office space and competing on who could get to class the quickest and who could find their way from point A to point B the quickest. We had a lot of fun together, and we got to know each other through those brief few days.

After we returned to Washington, we were sworn in as Members of Congress. I have a clear memory of how deeply Mark cared about his home State and his family. Congress is a tough place, and Mark was even tougher. Mark and I were competing for a subcommittee assignment on the Natural Resources Committee. He and I both wanted to serve on the Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs that oversaw the territories' natural resources of Hawaii and Alaska native affairs. I got the spot, and Mark came marching into my office with chocolate in his hand. He didn't make an appointment, by the way, and he had no staff with him. We were going to have a conversation, more of a spar over this

committee assignment. And over chocolate, Mark made me promise that his beautiful home State of Hawaii would always be my priority, and I did.

Mark created so many opportunities for us to visit and get to know his home State, the beauty that it offers with its natural resources. He actually created a long list of people that I should meet in order to fully understand the needs of the island. I am sorry, Mark, that I didn't get to join you in Hawaii, but thank you for the opportunity to know you.

Sami, thank you for sharing such a wonderful man with not only the freshmen class, but with the entire membership of Congress and the Senate. We love Mark, we love you, and your family, and we are here for you.

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

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great sadness to honor a colleague and a friend, Congressman Mark Takai.

Even though I only had two short years to work with Mark, that's all I needed to gain a sense of his overwhelming passion for public service. He served Hawaii as a state representative for 20 years, and defended our freedoms as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Hawaii Army National Guard. Mark honorably represented his constituents in the House of Representatives, and was a model to those who put service to others before themselves.

He always talked about his wife Sami, and kids, Matthew and Kaila. He beamed with excitement when they were coming to visit or when he was going back home.

Mark was very humble—when he was curious about something he didn't hesitate to ask questions. He was a fierce advocate for Hawaii, small businesses, and veterans, and was always thinking of ways to help. We are all better for having known him, and he will be missed.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a friend and dear colleague who was taken from us far too soon.

Congressman Mark Takai was a true statesman, public servant and an inspiration to each and every person who had the honor of knowing him. All of us in this Chamber are heartbroken by this loss.

Throughout his life—as a National Guardsman, a leader in the Hawaii state legislature, and as a Member of Congress, Mark epitomized what it means to serve.

He fought tenaciously to better the lives of his constituents, and showed courage and strength in the face of adversity.

Mark loved his family—his wife Sami and his children Matthew and Kaila. He wanted to make this country better for them and for everyone who calls it home.

Mark was an example of what Congress should be, and his legacy will live on through his vision and unyielding commitment to bettering the lives of others.

My sincerest thoughts and prayers continue to be with Mark's family. I can only imagine the sense of loss they feel, because I lost a friend and there is a hole in my heart.

We thank them for sharing Mark with us. May they find comfort in knowing that his impact on the American people and the people of Hawaii is indelible and will not be forgotten.

REMEMBERING THE LATE HONORABLE MARK TAKAI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA) for 30 minutes.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI).

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. GABBARD for bringing us together here this afternoon.

I have to say that this is a special time here for all of us. I was sitting here listening to all of the wonderful memories of Mark. We are so privileged to have known Mark.

May I just say this: I have been in and around Congress a long time, and this is so highly unusual for an individual, any individual, who has been here to have this kind of response. Mark was special. Amongst our sadness that we feel here, we can't help but smile when we think about him. That is what he did for us all the time.

I didn't know Mark very long at all, but I feel like I have known Mark forever. He has been a joy to all of us. He is somebody that has come into our lives and grabbed our hearts in such a meaningful way. And he came to Congress with a purpose. He said: Oh, he is merely a freshman. Mark Takai was never merely a freshman. He came with his commitment and his duty and his love of country wanting to do the best thing.

His impact was immediate. He had already been in the legislature and served in the Army National Guard. He had experience. He understood what it meant to be American and to do the right thing. He also understood what it meant to be a loving father, a husband, a son, and a wonderful sibling. He was the complete person. We don't meet many of those people in our lives. And when we do, we remember, we will always remember.

He demonstrated a selfless dedication to public service, to all of us, from a young age, by being a State representative for two decades, and through his service to our country in the Army National Guard and in Congress for such a short time.

My memories of him are just so joyful because I watched his commitment. I went on that trip with Leader PELOSI last April, and he was so privileged to be a part of that group. As the Leader said, we started out in San Francisco and then we went to Hawaii. We met many service people, and we were meeting the military with security aspects in mind.

Leader PELOSI said to Mark: Mark, you are our expert here, you have served, and you understand.

And Mark said: Oh, yes, ma'am.

Then he turned to me after a while and said: DORIS, I am just a freshman.

I said: You are not a freshman; you know what is going on; and you can stand up to the generals and everyone else because you understand.

And do you know what? He was our expert, and we were so proud of him throughout that whole trip.

That is what I remember so much about him. He took responsibility, but he also understood the human side. Because on that trip, as we went through our official duties, there would be Mark always with a smile and a laugh and always trying to find a better place to eat, a place he had heard about from someone he met on the street, some person who said: You have got to try this little restaurant.

So sometimes after our official dinners, he would say: Do you want to go to this little restaurant that I just found?

We would say: No, we don't want to do that.

But do you know what? He was a Pied Piper. He was a Pied Piper, and we wanted to be with him.

We are going to miss him so much. He was a complete person. We love him. We are going to miss him.

Let me just say this: Sami, Matthew, Kaila, the family, we will never forget him. He touched us in a way that few people have. We love him, and we will miss him. We love you, and we will always remember him.

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Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, so much has been said about Mark today, I can't repeat it all. But as I have been looking at this picture, I just find it hard to accept that he is gone.

You know, we meet each other here in the House. There are 435 people. We don't know each person who is here. We tend to meet each other best when we serve on committees. I actually first met Mark on the airplane, of course, because each Member of the California delegation flies home to California every week. It is to be forgiven if Members from Hawaii or Samoa don't go every week because, by the time you get there, it is time to come back to Washington, but Mark went home every week. And I would get on that plane, and there he would be, because he was so devoted not only to his constituents, but to his wife and to his children. He needed to be with them every week.

Much has been said about this trip to Asia. I was on that trip. And on these congressional delegations, spouses are invited to come to keep company with the Members. My husband was not able to come, and Mark's wife was not able to come either, so we sat next to each other for that entire trip. I heard all about his wonderful wife and his wonderful children throughout that trip in Asia.

I have such precise memories of Mark, as DORIS MATSUI has said. He was a freshman Member but someone who was on the Armed Services Committee, who had served in Iraq, who was Active Duty Hawaii National