

ELECTING A MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I send to the desk a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1342

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Lopez.
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY: Mr. Lopez.

Mrs. MCCLAIN (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McCORMICK). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRATULATING PARKER'S CON- VENIENCE STORES ON 40 YEARS IN BUSINESS

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Parker's Convenience Stores for celebrating 40 years in business.

Patrick Parker opened his first location in 1986 under the name Three Little Birds. Today, it has grown to 11 convenience stores throughout coastal Georgia.

All Parker's locations tailor their products to meet customers' needs. Some stores are known for their gourmet food or beach items while other stores are better known for their homestyle cooking.

Part of the local chain's success is due to the Parker family's continuous involvement in both their business and the community. From supporting their children's schools to giving back to other charities, the Parkers are pillars of coastal Georgia. This tradition will certainly continue as Jack Parker, Patrick's son, is moving home to take over and expand the family business.

I congratulate Parker's Convenience Stores on 40 years of successful business and wish them well in the future.

HONORING STELLA WHITNEY- WEST ON HER RETIREMENT

(Ms. OMAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. OMAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the remarkable career of Stella Whitney-West, who is retiring after 17 years as the CEO of NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center in Minneapolis.

NorthPoint, one of my district's federally qualified health centers, serves thousands of my constituents every single year. It was the first FQHC to be designated as a health care home by the Minnesota Department of Public Health.

NorthPoint's role in serving our community during the COVID-19 pandemic was immeasurable, not only providing critical care and information but also access to countless other resources like food and housing support.

The positive impact that NorthPoint has had on my district cannot be overstated, and it is all due to Stella Whitney-West's incredible leadership. While Ms. Whitney-West will be truly missed at NorthPoint, the strong foundation she leaves will have a positive impact on the generations to come. Her dedication to public health is invaluable. Her life's work serving others has made Minneapolis a healthier and more equitable place for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor and thank Stella Whitney-West for her distinguished career and faithful service to our community.

CONGRATULATING ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER KEITH RATTAY ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mrs. KIM of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the Mission Viejo assistant city manager, Keith Rattay, for his 29 years of dedicated service to our Mission Viejo community.

As a landscape architect, he etched his artistic mark across the city, including at the Oso Creek Trail and at all city parks, facilities, and recreation centers. Keith also helped with the Civic Center, Animal Services Center, amazing holiday lighting displays, and business designs. Literally, Keith's fingerprints are imprinted all over the city.

He has been a great resource to me, my office, and Mission Viejo at large. I thank Keith for making Mission Viejo as beautiful as it is today. I wish him a very happy and wonderful retirement.

ALEXANDRIA BROWN NAMED OHIO'S 13TH DISTRICT CHAMPION OF THE WEEK

(Mrs. SYKES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SYKES. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Alexandria Brown as Ohio's 13th Congressional District Champion of the Week.

Alexandria is a fire medic for the city of Green and the founder of Female Firefighters of Ohio, a nonprofit dedicated to providing resources to aspiring female firefighters through training, mentorship, and preparation for the fire service.

Today, fewer than 10 percent of firefighters are women. In order to increase the number of women in her field, Brown reaches out to aspiring female firefighters to provide support, including access to mentorship programs and monthly training sessions to gain critical experience and necessary certifications.

Alexandria cultivates a supportive training environment that allows women to enter the field feeling prepared, supported, capable of contributing to their departments, and, most importantly, keeping all of our communities safe.

I am thankful for all of those who are willing to run toward the fire while we all run away. They keep our community safe.

Alexandria's dedication to expanding female representation in her field is an inspiration for our community and a shining example of the spirit that makes our district the Birthplace of Champions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Alexandria Brown for her dedication to her field and the amazing work she does to keep our community safe.

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RECOGNIZING THE TUNNELS TO TOWERS FOUNDATION

(Mr. SESSIONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank retired Fire Department of New York Lieutenant Jack Kielty, a dedicated board member of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

This foundation stands in memory of 9/11 hero Stephen Siller, and they work to support those brave individuals like Jack Kielty and Steve Siller who willingly risked their lives at a time when New York and our Nation needed them.

I have witnessed the impact of their work through my friend and constituent, retired Sergeant Major Sid Hamid. As an Army Green Beret, Sergeant Major Hamid selflessly placed himself in harm's way many times and battled through nine separate tours on behalf of the United States military.

Through the program, Tunnel to Towers Foundation, Sergeant Hamid was gifted a smart home at the beginning of the summer. Jack Kielty of the New York City Fire Department traveled down to Franklin, Texas, to personally present the home to the Hamid family.

In recognition of this selflessness, I stand here today to say thank you to Jack Kielty with a very important certificate signed by the Governor of the State of Texas, Governor Greg Abbott, proclaiming Jack Kielty to be an honorary Texan.

Mr. Speaker, our great Nation needs people who will stand up at a time of need, and this is exactly what 9/11 has produced, brave Americans but also selflessness in their service to others.

I thank Jack Kielty, Tunnel to Towers, and Sergeant Hamid for their great service to this great Nation.

CELEBRATING OCFA BEST AND BRAVEST AWARDS

(Ms. PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 16th annual Orange County Fire Authority Best and Bravest Awards. This program celebrates OCFA's firefighters and professional staff, highlighting the brave service that keeps our communities safe.

For California, fire season is no longer just a season; it is year-round. Climate change has intensified the frequency and severity of wildfires. In this tough environment, OCFA personnel have consistently risen to the occasion, preventing tragedy, protecting lives, and safeguarding homes and possessions.

In Congress, I have proudly championed legislation to help firefighters. My bills would boost firefighter pay and benefits and standardize national disaster research to better support their work. Showing gratitude to first responders means supporting them both on and off the job.

Congratulations to the Best and Bravest Award winners, and I thank everyone at OCFA for their outstanding courage, dedication, and resilience.

DON'T DO WHAT WE DO IN CALIFORNIA

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I come from California, which there is a certain amount of risk in saying that because we do a lot of wacky things there. It is a wonderful State with wonderful geography, wonderful weather, and so many great things, but the governance sometimes—I don't know.

What we are exporting currently is a lot of the work of the California Air Resources Board, which currently is trying to regulate locomotives into technology that doesn't even yet exist, and therefore, foist that same nontechnology onto other States. We are talking about the logistics of moving freight in California but also out of California and that can't be moved because they don't have a plan for that.

They would have them switch locomotives at the border, but with CARB's plans, they don't really care about that. They want to make everybody in the whole country buy locomotives to meet a Tier 4, they call it, which isn't even available yet. Beyond Tier 4, they want to go to zero emissions, which isn't really zero, the so-called electric trains. They are not even available. The technology isn't there, and CARB wants all of this done by the year 2030.

Imagine the logistics of getting food from California, which people rely on. Mr. Speaker, 99 percent of certain crops come from California. We won't be able to ship them out as well as the military material that might need to be moved out of our State in times of war or conflict. Anyway, don't do what we do in California.

PRESERVING A CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD

(Mr. MOONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the recently established public/private partnership between the Berkeley County Commission, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks and Recreation Board in West Virginia's Second Congressional District, which I am blessed to represent.

This partnership will lead to the establishment of Hoke's Run Battlefield Park near Falling Waters 163 years after the battle was fought, highlighting the importance of Berkeley County and West Virginia's role in the Civil War.

The planned preservation of the 10-acre battlefield where Union General Robert Patterson battled Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson will educate visitors on the small battle's historic importance to the first major battle of the Civil War at Bull Run. The park will feature a recreation trail, interpretive signage, and a pavilion.

I look forward to the opening of this new park, bringing area residents and visitors alike to learn more about the rich history of Berkeley County, West Virginia, as the northern gateway to the Shenandoah Valley.

WORKING FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today with my friend, assistant Democratic leader JOE NEGUSE, to talk about my law, the Honoring our PACT Act.

It was signed into law by President Joe Biden in August of 2022 and has

since helped more than a million veterans and their survivors receive the healthcare and benefits that they have earned.

In the 116th Congress, we passed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 that helped blue water Navy veterans receive care and benefits for exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam war.

These veterans waited decades for this relief. I am so glad that we could help them cut red tape and make it easier for them to receive healthcare for certain conditions, but it took way too long to get it done.

After blue water Navy, we were hearing from veterans around the country about being exposed to burn pits and other toxins when they were serving our country more recently. They were experiencing serious illnesses that they thought were connected to their toxic exposure.

Many of these servicemembers were directed to throw trash, plastic, and other items into burn pits, and this meant breathing in the toxic air, or they were exposed to jet fuel for long periods of time due to their job in the service.

It is easy to look back and think that this was not a good idea, but they did not have a choice at that time and were following orders.

It was taking the Department of Veterans Affairs too long to address these veterans' illnesses on its own due to the perceived cost and the difficulty in obtaining the scientific evidence needed in order to help.

We knew there was a strong need, and with the lessons learned from blue water, we knew we needed to act. This was the origin of the Honoring our PACT Act.

When we send our servicemembers into harm's way, we make a pact to care for them when they come home. This is one of the most sacred promises in our country and the ultimate goal of this law.

Thanks to the PACT Act, veterans no longer need to prove the connection between their service and an illness. The law outlines 23 categories of presumptive respiratory illnesses and cancers, representing over 300 individual conditions for which veterans can quickly get healthcare and benefits. Since the law was signed, several more presumptive conditions have been added to the list with more on the way.

Congress was able to work together on a bipartisan basis to get this done for veterans. Unfortunately, not much has gotten done for veterans since then, which truly troubles me. Helping those who have served should be a non-partisan issue and one that gets due attention, no matter which party is in charge.

I will continue momentarily, but I yield to my friend from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE), our assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. NEGUSE. First, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that we are so grateful to the