EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA ON HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the nation's greatest presidents, Barack Obama, who turns 60 years old. It is fitting and proper that we take a moment to recount and appreciate the extraordinary accomplishments of President Barack Obama, the 44th president and one of the singular figures in American history. Madam Speaker, I remember that cold morning of January 20, 2009, one of the coldest days on record in Washington, D.C. But it was nothing compared to the chill wind blowing through the American economy and body politic.

The nation was facing economic challenges unseen since the Great Depression: Americans were losing their jobs at a frightening rate of 800,000 per month; the national unemployment rate had risen to 7.8 percent and would continue to climb until reaching its peak of 10.0 percent in October 2009. For African Americans, the numbers were much grimmer, a jobless rate of 13.5 percent in January 2009 which would grow to 16.5 percent by the end of the year. And on top of this, tens of thousands of American families each month were losing their health insurance and their homes to foreclosure.

The United States was still bogged down in the quagmire that was the Iraq War and young people by the thousands were being forced to defer or drop out of college because of lack of financial aid. And the average price of gas exceeded $4 per gallon. It was against this backdrop that I watched from the inaugural platform as Barack Obama, surrounded by his radiant and beautiful wife, Michelle, and their two adorable daughters, rose to take the oath of office. After being sworn in as the nation's 44th President of the United States, President Obama reassured an anxious but hopeful nation, saying:

''Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met.''

Watching Barack Obama address the nation that day, spectators in attendance and viewers across the country and around the world understood they were witnessing a historic president, the first African American ever to hold the nation's highest office.

But more than being a historic president, Barack Obama's actions and leadership over the ensuing eight years would demonstrate his would be a consequential presidency that changed America for the better. His first and most pressing task was to rescue an economy on the brink of collapse. Working with the Democratic-controlled Congress, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was passed, which created 3.7 million jobs and saved the jobs of millions of teachers, firefighters, police officers, and social service providers. The Recovery Act also cut taxes for working families, extended unemployment insurance, and expanded the Earned Income and Child tax credits, which disproportionately benefit African American families. The verdict is in on the economic plan put in place by President Obama and the Democratic Congress and it is undeniable.

The Recovery Act ended the Great Recession, transformed the economy from one hemorrhaging jobs to one that created over 16 million new jobs over a record 71 consecutive months. The national unemployment rate dipped under 5 percent for the first time since President Clinton left office, the deficit was cut by 71 percent, and the Dow Jones stock market index set 118 record closing highs and stood at 19,732 on January 20, 2017, a threefold over its nadir of 6,547 at the depths of the Great Recession. And, as an added benefit, the average price of gasoline fell from more than $4.11 per gallon to $1.80, the lowest price since before the tragedy of September 11.

The Obama years also effected policy changes in the areas of criminal justice reform, health and education, national security, and foreign affairs. A partial listing of these achievements is substantial, impressive, and varied. President Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act in August 2010, which reduces the disparity in the amounts of powder cocaine and crack cocaine required for the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences and eliminates the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine. In July 2015, President Obama became the first president ever to tour a federal prison when he visited the El Reno Federal Correctional Institution outside of Oklahoma City. President Obama launched the Smart on Crime initiative through which the Department of Justice modified its charging policies certain federal low-level drug-related offenses, improved diversion and re-entry policies, and strengthened protections for the most vulnerable.

President Obama established Smart on Juvenile Justice grant program to expand the use of effective community-based alternatives to youth detention and launched the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program for Incarcerated Individuals to test new models to allow incarcerated Americans to receive Pell Grants and pursue the postsecondary education with the goal of helping them get jobs, support their families, and turn their lives around.

President Obama directed the Office of Personnel Management to act where it can to ''ban the box'' by modifying its rules to delay inquiries into criminal history until later in the hiring process and called on Congress. to enact legislation ''banning the box'' on job applications in the private sector. President Obama increased the use of body-worn cameras through $20 million in grants to state and local law enforcement. President Obama issued an Executive Order to increase the capacity of VA mental-health programs by hiring 1,600 more mental-health professionals and expanding the capacity of the Veterans Crisis Line. President Obama provided nearly $60 billion in benefit payments under the Post–9/11 G.I. Bill to over 1.5 million individuals and relaxed the evidence requirements for veterans seeking disability pay for post-traumatic stress disorder with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

President Obama acted to reduce gun violence by issuing executive orders requiring background checks for people trying to buy some of the most dangerous weapons and other items through a trust or corporation and an overhaul of the background check system to make it more efficient and effective. President Obama signed into law the Affordable Care Act passed by the Democratic Congress which has provided access to quality, affordable health insurance to nearly 20 million previously uninsured Americans.

President Obama launched the ''My Brother's Keeper'' Initiative in 2014 to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. In October 2009, Congress passed, and President Obama signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, historic legislation extending coverage of federal hate-crime law to include attacks based on the victim's race, religion, nationality, or actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

President Obama established the new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy for young undocumented people who came to the U.S. as children in an effort to better focus enforcement resources. President Obama expanded opportunity for America's children by strengthening Head Start. President Obama made college more affordable by increasing Pell grants, keeping interest rates on student loans low, and helping students manageably repay their loans. President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, which made historic investments: in improved child nutrition and health for the 31 million children who rely on school meals and updated science-based school meal standards to increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy, while reducing fats and sodium.

In December 2010, the Congress passed, and President Obama signed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 into law, allowing gay men and women to serve openly and with integrity in the U.S. military. President Obama also made history by appointing two women to the U.S. Supreme Court, including the first Hispanic American to serve on the Court. President Obama appointed the first African American man and woman to serve as Attorney General and the first woman to Chair the Federal Reserve Board. In the area of foreign affairs and national security, President Obama ended the Iraq War, assembled and led an international coalition to impose sanctions so crippling on Iran that it was forced to

● This ''bullet'' symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.
Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

the negotiating table that yielded the Iran Nuclear Agreement that prevents Iran from ever attaining a nuclear weapon. And of course, as the world knows, because of President Obama's leadership, General Motors is alive, and Osama Bin Laden is dead.

President Barack Obama represented our country with grace, integrity, honor, and distinction. He provided consolation, hope, and healing in the face of unspeakable tragedies such as the massacre of innocent children at Sandy Hook, worshippers at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, spectators at the Boston Marathon, and mass shootings in Aurora, Colorado and Tucson, Arizona. He expressed and symbolized our joy and pride in the progress made over the last half century—and the distance we still have to travel—when he marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and addressed the multitude from the spot on the steps where Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his dream for America's future.

It is clear beyond doubt that President Obama kept the promise he made to the nation seven years ago on that cold day in January when he said:

"Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real . . . . But know this America: They will be met."

They were more than just met; under his leadership they were overcome with amazing grace. And because of President Barack Obama, when he left office the United States was stronger, more prosperous, and better positioned than ever to win the future. As a presidential candidate in 2008, then Senator Obama promised the America people "change you can believe in."

In office, President Obama made good on that promise, delivering positive change that the American people can see and feel. And that is what makes his one of the most consequential presidencies in American history. I wish President Obama a happy birthday, and thank him for all he did in leading our country to a new era of greatness.

CONGRATULATING BILL HAGER FOR BEING NAMED 2021 U.P. VETERAN OF THE YEAR

HON. JACK BERGMAN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize retired Master Sergeant C. William "Bill" Hager as the 2021 Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year. His continued service on and off the battlefield, his dedication to fellow veterans, and his devotion to our local Michigan communities make him a well-deserving recipient of this distinguished award.

The U.P. Veteran of the Year is chosen annually by a selection committee consisting of past commanders of various service organizations throughout the Upper Peninsula. It recognizes Yooper veterans who go above and beyond in their service to their local communities and fellow veterans.

A native Yooper, Bill was born and raised in Iron River and has stayed a longtime resident of the U.P. During his military career, Bill served in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. National Guard, where he was decorated with numerous awards which include but are not limited to the Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, and Vietnam Campaign Medal. His service to his fellow veterans has not waivered as he continues to be a life member of the DAV, American Legion, VFW, Vietnam Veterans of America, and AM Vets where he continues to advocate. The impact of his service on his fellow Michiganders cannot be overstated.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Bill Hager for his decades of service to fellow Michigan veterans and for being named the 2021 Upper Peninsula Veteran of the Year. Michiganders can take great pride in knowing the First District is home to such a selfless and devoted individual. On behalf of my constituents, I wish Bill all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING COACH BOB SEPULVEDA

HON. YVETTE HERRELL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Ms. HERRELL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge Coach Bob Sepulveda. Bob is a 1954 graduate of Goodwell High School in Goodwell, Oklahoma, where he lettered in football, basketball, and baseball. He then attended Oklahoma Panhandle State University, earning his B.A. degree in History in 1958, while also lettering in football and track.

Bob's coaching career began in 1960 in Telluride, Colorado, where he served as head basketball and track coach and assistant baseball coach. His 1964 basketball team won the Mountain League District Class A Championship and placed second at the Western Colorado Regional Class A tournament. He also helped coach the 1964 Telluride High School baseball team that won the Class A State Championship.

Taking his coaching career on the road, Bob moved to Alamogordo, New Mexico, in 1964, where he coached both track and football for 32 years. In 1969 he was named head track coach and then head football coach in 1971.

During his 27 years as head track coach his teams won more medals for Alamogordo than any coach in its history.

19 District Championships, 5 State Championships, 1 second place finish, 5 third place finishes, 170 Invitational Track meet wins, and 102 first place medals at the State Track Meet showcase Bob's dedication to the team and the athletes.

Under Bob's coaching, several student athletes went on to become NCAA Champions, some establishing records that still stand today. Three of his athletes even went on to the Olympic trials.

If his record alone wasn't a testament to Bob's coaching abilities, he has also received numerous awards during his tenure at Alamogordo High School. He was selected as New Mexico Coach of the Year for boys track in 1982, 1991, and 1996 and received the NHSACA Region 8 Coach of the Year in 1982, 1991, and 1996. He was also named the NFSHSA Section 6 Coach of the Year in 1991 and 1996 and was also awarded, along with his wife Marilyn, the New Mexico High School Coaches Association Level IV Coaching Milestone ring in 1989 and was inducted into the Alamogordo Tiger Hall of Fame in 1988. He also served on the Board of Directors for the New Mexico Track and Field and Cross-Country Association and was the President of the Association from 1991 through 1992.

In a fitting act of recognition for his lifelong dedication and achievements, the Board of Education of the Alamogordo Public School District voted to name the Alamogordo High School Tiger Stadium Track in honor of Bob Sepulveda. A public celebration and official public christening will take place on September 3, 2021.

IN RECOGNITION OF DEPUTY PHILLIP CAMPAS OF THE KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of the Deputy Phillip Campas who passed away in the line of duty on July 25, 2021.

Deputy Campas began serving the Kern County Sheriff's Department in February of 2016. He held a variety of positions within the department including patrol deputy, recruit training officer, and SWAT team member. He provided firearms training and mentoring for all armed staff. In addition, Deputy Campas served the United States Marine Corps and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2008. His commitment to protecting the Kern County community and the citizens of the United States was unwavering and a true sign of heroism.

Deputy Campas demonstrated great courage and bravery while protecting the residents of Kern County. During his final mission, Deputy Campas lived up to his reputation of fearlessness in his rescue efforts and leaves behind a legacy of incredible dedication and selflessness. The Kern County Sheriff's Department and his entire community mourns this great loss.

Deputy Campas is survived by his wife Christina, his two daughters, and his stepson. He is remembered as a hero of Kern County, a true public servant, and a beloved member of his community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life of Deputy Sheriff Phillip Campas.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. FRENCH HILL

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 249.