space age, have steadily blazed the trails and stayed the course to bring recognition of the accomplishments of women not only in the United States but across the world and across the seas.

Each of us can identify at least one woman who forever marked our life in a positive way. My grandmother lived to her late nineties and was always the most influential person in my life. In the 1950s, after my grandfather was killed by a drunk driver, she went to work as a clerk in the ladies' ready-to-wear section of a department store; and while she would have continued to work there, they forced her to quit at the age of 75.

She taught me the values of public service, and this is why I have dedicated my life to public service. She was the most influential woman in my life. All of us have people like that, women who have influenced us in a positive way. Those American women, they are a rare breed.

In other countries, like Iraq, where I recently traveled on a fact-finding mission, women recount the decades of torture and execution and oppression they experienced under the tyrant and dictator Saddam Hussein. For most women it has only been since our toppling of that vicious and murderous tyrant that they have been allowed to pursue opportunities that we take for granted, like employment. On the historic election day, which I was privileged to observe this year, for many Iraqi women this was their first chance to ever vote.

Yet as encouraging as these illustrations are, millions of women are victims to a destructive force known as domestic violence. In fact, in the United States alone, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a boyfriend or a husband at some point in their life. Moreover, the Department of Justice's statistics show that in 2003 alone 9 percent of all murder victims were killed by their spouse or their partners. Eighty percent of those victims were females.

□ 2000

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious problem, not just for our Nation's women but also for our Nation's families. It is a serious problem for children, children that live in those homes with all of that serious, serious turmoil.

Domestic abuse scars children through the images of violence and fighting; the ramifications if they try to intervene; the emotional anguish they suffer for years. Domestic abuse in some cases results in withdrawal or unhealthy perfectionism, and in other cases they act it out.

The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family concluded in 1996 that a child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. In addition, the American Medical Association has calculated that family violence costs taxpayers in the range of $5 billion to $10 billion a year in medical expenses.

It is not only a family problem and a criminal problem; it is a health issue. Domestic violence costs us in police and court costs, shelters, foster care, sick leave, and nonproductivity.

As a former judge and founder of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, this epidemic is of great alarm to me. I believe we must work to eliminate this domestic abuse while protecting the victims that have already resulted from this trend.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all of us on this day, as we recognize the worth of women, are determined to make sure that they live in a safe environment in their homes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN HONOR OF TILLIE FOWLER, FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday we announced on the floor of this House that our former colleague, Tillie Fowler, had passed away that day. She suffered a stroke on Monday and went to the hospital and never recovered from that. It was a sad day for all of us, and there were so many Members that served with Tillie that wanted to honor her life and her achievements that we asked for this time tonight to celebrate her life, to celebrate the contributions that she made not only to her community, not only to the State of Florida, but to the Nation as a whole; and so that is why we are here tonight.

Tillie Fowler was one of those unique individuals that could balance so many things in her life. I never had the chance to actually serve with Tillie because we were from the same hometown and while she served on the city council at the local level, I was serving in the State government; and when she left the Congress in 2000, I ran to take her seat. But I knew her as a friend for 35 years, and I watched her involve herself in the community, and I watched her get involved in local politics; I watched her become a United States House of Representative representative from the Fourth Congressional District. Through all of that, I saw the way that she loved her children, the way that she loved her husband, Buck, and the way that she loved her community.

I can remember so many times, as we would come back, because she was in Washington working with a large law firm, that we would ride a plane here and ride a plane back to Jacksonville and her husband, Buck, was always there at the airport to greet her and give her a big hug. So I just think there are so many people here that cared so much about her, because not only was she tough in what she tried to do but, more than anything, she just liked people. She cared about people, whether they were important people or just people she would see on the street. She had a way of making everybody feel at ease.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by her death, but I am proud of the legacy that she leaves behind her; and I know that Members here tonight share in that.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my colleagues in celebrating the life and accomplishments of former Congresswoman Tillie Kidd Fowler. Ms. Fowler passed away suddenly last week but leaves a proud legacy of achievement and integrity.

Tillie Fowler was born in 1942 and grew up in Milledgeville, Georgia. Her father, state Senator Culver Kidd, was a legendary Democratic political figure in the Georgia Legislature for over 40 years and her mother, Katherine, was active in the community. She received both her bachelor's degree and law degree from Emory University.

After law school, she moved to Washington, DC and worked as a congressional staffer for Representative Robert Stephens (D–GA) and later as Counsel in the White House Office of Consumer Affairs under President Richard Nixon. In 1968, she married attorney L. Buck Fowler and in 1971 moved to Jacksonville, Florida. Shortly thereafter, she put her professional career on hold to raise her daughters, Tillie Anne and Elizabeth. During this time she served as the President of the Junior League of Jacksonville (1982–83), chaired the Florida Humanities Council (1989–91) and was active in a number of other charitable organizations, including the American Red Cross and Volunteer Jacksonville.

She returned to political public service when she was elected to the Jacksonville City Council in 1985. She became that body's first Republican and first woman President.

Tillie Fowler was elected to Congress in 1992, winning a seat that had been held by a Democrat for 42 years. She secured an appointment to the House Armed Services committee, the only Republican woman on that committee at the time. Her subcommittee assignments included Readiness, Personnel and Military Construction. In 1997, she was appointed by the Speaker of the House to a task

force created to investigate allegations of sexual harassment and abuse at U.S. military training bases.

She also served on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, and in the 106th Congress she was named Chairman of the newly created Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Emergency Management.

In 1998, she was chosen by her Republican colleagues to be the Vice Chairman of the Republican Conference, making her the highest-ranking woman in the U.S. Congress when she retired. She also served for six years as a Deputy Majority Whip.

A year and a half before the terrible events of September 11, 2001, she drafted the Preparedness Against Terrorism Act of 2000 (H.R. 4210). Her bill would have centralized the Federal government's anti-terrorism efforts by creating the President's Council on Domestic Terrorism Preparedness within the White House. Many of her proposed reforms were enacted in the legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security.

Her reputation as a knowledgeable and articulate U.S. Representative resulted in her appointment to several boards outside of her committee responsibilities: U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors; Stennis Center for Public Service Board of Trustees, Vice Chairman; Defense Department's Centers for Security Studies Board of Visitors; and the House Page Board, Chairman.

Upon her departure from Congress, Representative Fowler's extraordinary efforts to ensure a strong United States military were recognized by the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense. She received the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. These are the highest civilian awards given by the Navy and the Department of Defense.

Shortly after leaving Congress, she was appointed by the Speaker of the House to the Commission on the Future of the Aerospace Industry which was created by Congress to assess the aerospace industry in the global economy, particularly in relationship to the national security of the United States. The Center for Strategic & International Studies also named her to its Distinguished Congressional Fellows panel.

She was appointed to the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2001. In May of 2003, the Secretary named her as Chairman of the prestigious board which advises the Secretary of Defense on issues central to strategic planning for the department. She is the first woman to serve of Chairman of the Defense Policy Board in its 20-year history. She also serves on the Chief of Naval Operations' Executive Panel whose purpose is to advise the CNO on questions related to national seapower.

In the spring of 2003, she was appointed by the Secretary of Defense to lead the seven-member panel created by Congress to review sexual misconduct allegations at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The panel conducted a 90-day study of the policies, management, organizational practices and cultural elements of the Academy that may have been conducive to alleged sexual misconduct. The panel's final report was delivered to the Secretary of Defense and the Congress on September 22, 2003.

When allegations of prisoner abuse by U.S. military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq surfaced in May 2004, the Secretary of Defense again turned to Representative Fowler. The Secretary appointed her along with two former Secretaries of Defense and a retired four-star general, to a blue-ribbon panel charged with providing the Secretary with independent, professional advice on issues related to the allegations of prisoner mistreatment.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, this House was a better place for Tillie Fowler's service. She was a remarkable woman with a rare combination of passionate drive and dedication for what she believed and a caring spirit for the people around her. She made people feel at ease and she always did anything she could to help others. During lifetime of service she exhibited a striking presence of personality, integrity and intellect that will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to our conference chairman, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE).

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding to me and for hosting this Special Order honoring Tillie's life and her legacy. It is a wonderful tribute that Tillie deserved. The outpouring of emotion and praise here tonight, in Jacksonville, and all over the Nation proves how special a person Tillie Fowler was.

Universally respected and trusted, Tillie was a model public servant. She was also a model parent, a model spouse, and most importantly to me, a model friend. Lucky enough to have found her calling at an early age, Tillie became an aide to Congressman Robert Stephens from Georgia shortly after earning her law degree from Emory University. Her talents were quickly recognized, and she soon found herself in the Office of Consumer Affairs in the Nixon White House. There she met her good lifelong friend, now Senator ELIZABETH DOLE.

Following her public service early in life, Tillie and her husband moved to Florida and began their family. They raised two lovely daughters, Tillie Anne and Elizabeth. While in Florida, Tillie mastered one of the most important skills for a woman in politics: balancing her family and her desire to serve. Tillie always put her family first and, at the same time, found the energy to serve her community, first in the Jacksonville City Council and then as its chair.

In 1993, Tillie came to Washington as a Member of Congress, the same year I did; and we became fast friends. As my classmate, she was more than a colleague. Together we entered what was then, and still now to some extent, a man's world. We relied on each other for strength and for guidance, and shared the experience of being freshmen women together, two of only three in our Republican class that year.

From those first days in Congress, I recognized Tillie as a savvy politician but also as a selfless soul. She followed her convictions with tenacity and with courage. More than just a Member of Congress, Tillie Fowler was a patriotic legislator who let her conscience guide her through the most treacherous halls of Congress oftentimes. She earned respect from her colleagues, both men and women, Democrat and Republican; and she had no enemies that I ever knew of.

As Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference, Tillie set the standard for women in our leadership. She worked tirelessly on issues that affected the entire Nation. She was an active proponent of a strong military, and even went on to advise the Defense Department. She knew her stuff and she was never shy about speaking her mind, confident that her insight was valuable, and it was.

Tillie had the ability to disagree with you with a smile on her face all the while. She showed America that women legislators need not be relegated solely to women's issues; that we care about the same issues that men do, but with just a little different perspective. And today, International Women's Day, it is truly appropriate that we honor and celebrate the life of one of our Nation's finest.

Tillie was a friend to me, a great friend in times of sadness and in times of joy. I will miss her friendship and her guidance and know that there are countless others among us to whom she meant so much. Our prayers continue to be with Tillie's family, her two wonderful daughters and her husband, Buck; but her loved ones should know that Tillie left them, our country, and all who had the very, very good fortune to know her a wonderful and lasting legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield now to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the distinguished majority leader of the House.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for taking this Special Order in memory of Tillie Fowler.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember a warrior, Tillie Kidd Fowler, wife, mother, friend and patriot, died 6 days ago and left behind her a legacy of service all will admire but few will match.

She was as good a friend as she was a politician and was superb in both roles because no matter what hat she was wearing, it was still the same Tillie underneath. When word reached Washington last week that Tillie had left us, we all remembered the same things: we remembered her courage, her tenacity, and we remembered her leadership.

There was no national security issue about which she was not an expert. There was not a branch of our military that did not seek her guidance and help in promoting the policies that keep our Nation safe. And there was not a serviceman or -woman in uniform who did not have a loyal and caring friend in the gentlewoman from Jacksonville.

Her retirement from Congress, as anyone who knew Tillie could have

guessed, did not in any way signal her retirement from public service. In the years after she left us, she helped lead public investigations into sexual misconduct at the Air Force Academy and prison abuse in Iraq. The wrongdoers in those cases up and down the chains of command, like her political opponents over the years, learned the hard way why Representative Fowler earned the nickname ''Steel Magnolia.''

She had also served since 2001 on the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, advising Secretary Rumsfeld on strategy and policy during the tumultuous last 4 years.

Whatever the situation, Tillie Fowler's motivation was service: service to her family, to her community, to her country. For that reason, far more than for her many career and legislative achievements, last week this country lost a hero.

Decades from now, Mr. Speaker, when we too have left this building and, indeed, this world; when the controversies of our age are largely forgotten, the service and integrity that defined Tillie Fowler's life will still be remembered. She was a woman, good and true, who said things worth saying, did things worth doing, and served causes worth serving.

When you think about it, what more can you say about anyone? Tillie Fowler was always admired, Mr. Speaker, and now she will be missed.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) for arranging this Special Order.

As all of my colleagues probably know, as we remember Tillie it is always easy to remember the great, wonderful stories of an incredible life. When she left Congress, I knew how proud she was of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) replacing her, if you can replace anyone in this world. She knew the important things for her community, for her Nation were to be able to lead in a strong collective voice on national security. In that effort, she was the most incredible of spokespersons.

She was an incredibly strong voice for Jacksonville, a stronger voice for women, a role model for any person striving to serve in public life, and an incredible friend to all who knew her. There was not a day that went by that she did not mention Buck or her children, Elizabeth or Tillie, Jr. Whether it was just a casual comment; that she was heading back to see them at home this weekend; that they had just bought a condo at the beach; that they were getting ready to embark on another adventure; or that Tillie, Jr. had got a job, it was always about her family that she shared the joys of her life in service here.

I know Buck, Elizabeth, and Tillie, Jr. that your hearts ache, but they certainly do not ache alone. I will always remember her generosity of spirit and the time she took for a new Member of this Congress. Her first question whenever she saw you, in that gorgeous Southern accent, was ''How are you, dear?'' ''How is your day?'' ''How can I help?''

She had a little ceremonial leather chair that was a beautiful antique. And when she was leaving Congress, she rolled it down to my office and said, ''You always admired this chair. I want you to have it.'' I hope the office of the Capitol architect does not come looking for it, but I do have Tillie's chair.

When I ran for the Senate, I remember her coming from across town, sitting in my office and asking me if I really wanted to do this and if I knew what I was getting into. I told her I thought I did. And she said, well, if you are ready for the challenge, I am ready to saddle up and ride alongside you. And she never, never wavered in her support.

When I would go to Jacksonville and meet new friends, they would first ask me, what does Tillie think; what does Tillie think of your chances; does Tillie support you; and if Tillie supports you, that is good enough for me.

□ 2015

This business of politics, it is incredible when that universal voice of a community would always first ask, regardless of party, what does Tillie think?

As we honor her memory and pray for her soul, we thank God that he gave us a chance to get to know her. And those that did not, you missed an incredibly vivacious, talented and smart woman. We honor her commitment to this Nation and the legacy she leaves behind. And we pray for Buck and her kids, as they struggle through these dark days and as they reflect on her life, they know, yes, she was larger than life, but she was simply and modestly just Tillie. That is how she would want to be remembered, and we remember her in that way, a hero among us, a great patriot, a loving mother and wife, a superb human being. We pray for her soul.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW).

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to express in words the feeling that we have outpouring here this evening for Tillie and our remembrance of her. She was always strong but gentle, brilliant yet reasonable. She had all of the types of things that we really need to look for in our leaders.

Emily, my wife, and I had a very unique relationship with Tillie. When married Members come to Congress, they are assigned by the congressional spouses what we call a little brother or little sister. And Emily loved to remind Buck that he was her little brother. We had a friendship that went beyond being just colleagues; it went outside of this Chamber, outside of this Capitol. The friendship that evolved is one that I will always remember.

We had a service down in Jacksonville just a few days ago. Two plane loads came down to be at that service from both the Pentagon as well as from this great body here. The outpouring that we saw in that community was really beautiful. The military was there. Both sides of the church were flanked by soldiers from all of the services, and the service ended up with a flyover, which I am sure Tillie would have loved. I remember the preacher in that small church. The church was absolutely full. People were standing in the front yard of the church just to hear the service and be near those so close to Tillie. The preacher talked about one of the greatest gifts man has is your memory. Tillie will always live in our memory. We love her, and we really just absolutely will never forget how wonderful she was and what a great influence she was and how she left her mark permanently on this body, her community and her country.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

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

Mr. Speaker, I represent the western part of Jacksonville and flew down for the funeral for Tillie Fowler and was quite moved. We lost a great leader. For Florida, she was a strong advocate, and we will miss Tillie quite a bit.

For 8 years, I had the privilege and honor of working with her in Congress on behalf of the people of Jacksonville. I feel a great deal of sympathy and extend prayers for her husband, Buck, and her two daughters, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth. Tillie and I worked on the Cecil Field Navy Master Jet Base when it showed up on the base closure. Many a night we were working together shoulder to shoulder trying to figure out how we could prevent the Navy from closing this important Navy jet base. Unfortunately, we did not succeed, but I learned a lot from her.

She combined humility with ambition. She had dedication, but she had grace. She was a woman of many talents. What the remarkable thing about Tillie was, you would talk to her and say, Tillie, I do not want to do that. She could get other people to do what they did not want to do, and in the end, they liked doing it somehow because of her leadership. It is a remarkable trait. She had a profound impact on all of the people she worked with, and she touched all of us.

Jacksonville used to be a small town. It is a much larger town, and that is largely attributable, I think, to Tillie Fowler's activities. It has 1 million people. The city is recognized as a growing urban center. It hosted the Super Bowl recently, a feat very few cities have had the opportunity to claim. Jacksonville maintains a strong commitment to armed services, and has two major Naval facilities there.

The successful transformation of Jacksonville over the past two decades owes much to Tillie Fowler. She worked on behalf of the area as a volunteer and as an elected official at the local and Federal level. This dedication to public service is really a family trait.

While making a run for Congress in 1992, she offered to limit herself to four terms. All of us went up to her after she was in the midst of trying to decide to tell her, I think your constituents would be very happy if you continue serving, but she was quite principled, and she said she was going to leave Congress and honor her four terms. In fact, I believe the leadership asked her to stay. She accomplished many of the goals she set out to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost more than an experienced lawmaker, public servant; we lost a good friend. She was a good friend to the people of Florida and to all of the men and women of our armed services. God bless Tillie Fowler.

Mr. Speaker, last week our nation lost a great leader and Florida lost a strong advocate with the death of Tillie Fowler. For eight years, I had the privilege and honor of working with her in Congress on behalf of the people of Jacksonville. I miss my former colleague and my friend, and my prayers are with her husband Buck and their two daughters, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth.

We worked together on the Brae commission when they had Cecil Field Navy master jet base on the closure list. We worked many nights together.

She combined humility with ambition, and dedication with grace. As a women of many talents, she could get other people to do what they didn't want to do and to like it. She had a profound impact on all of the lives she touched throughout her life.

Not so long ago, Jacksonville was looked upon as a small city supporting paper mills, a commercial port, and military bases. Today, the Jacksonville area numbers one million people and the city is recognized as a vibrant, growing urban center. Most recently it hosted the Super Bowl, a feat only a few cities can claim. Although it has shed some of its past, Jacksonville maintains its strong commitment to our armed services as the host to major military facilities.

The successful transformation of Jacksonville over the past two decades owes much to Tillie Fowler. She worked on behalf of the area as a volunteer, and as an elected official at the local and federal levels. This dedication to public service is a family trait.

Tillie's father, Culver Kidd, served for 42 years in the Georgia legislature, and her mother, Katherine Kidd, was a community leader. Tillie learned about civic and local involvement in Milledgeville, Georgia. I should point out that Milledgeville has contributed a great deal to this nation. It was also the home of the distinguished writer Flannery O'Connor and the long-time Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Carl Vinson.

From her small hometown, Tillie pursued her education at Emory University in Atlanta earning a B.A. in political science and later a J.D. Armed with her law degree, Tillie came here to Washington, D.C., and worked on the staff of Congressman Robert Stephens of Georgia. Her strong talents were soon recognized and she was brought to the White House as a counsel in the Nixon Administration.

During this period, Tillie not only expanded her professional horizons, she met and married a fellow attorney, L. Buck Fowler. In 1971, she moved with her husband to Jacksonville, Florida, where she set about the important job of raising a family. Although she put her career on hold, Tillie did not ease up on public service. She volunteered her efforts as the President of the Junior League of Jacksonville, with the American Red Cross, and other charitable groups.

In 1985, she returned to the political scene with her election to the City Council and served on the council from 1985 through 1992. In 1989, she became President of the Jacksonville City Council, the first Republican and the first woman to hold that position. Although she retired from the council in 1992, her political career was just changing direction; she then successfully ran for Congress.

Congresswoman Fowler returned to Washington with an ambitious agenda. She vowed to make Mayport Naval Station a top priority, and she succeeded. Through her position on the Armed Services Committee, she built a reputation as an advocate of a strong national defense. She improved the nation's commitment to military personnel and facilities in her district, throughout the nation, and around the world. Although a woman with a petite figure, she cast a giant shadow in support of our armed services: generals and admirals always knew her by her first name.

While making her first run for Congress in 1992, Mrs. Fowler offered to limit herself to four terms. Although she was asked by her leadership and her colleagues to reconsider, Tillie is stepping down after four terms. After all, she had accomplished the goals she set out to achieve.

We have lost more than an experienced lawmaker and public servant; we have lost a good friend. In fact, Mrs. Fowler was a good friend to the people of Florida, and perhaps more importantly, to the men and women of our armed services.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) who also represents part of Jacksonville.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, my favorite hymn is ''Let the Work I Have Done Speak For Me.'' I think that more than anything explains our friend and former colleague, Tillie Fowler. My prayers and deepest regret goes out to her immediate family, Buck and their two girls, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth.

Tillie and I shared a lot. We were in the great class of 1992. We said that was the class, the year of the woman. One distinguished objective to describe Tillie was she was a tremendous fighter. She struggled for what she believed in and for the betterment of the people in the region she served. Above all, Tillie loved her country, and she fought hard to protect it. She distinguished herself in the area of military and, in particular, fighting for women's rights in the military.

I also served with Tillie on the Committee on Transportation and the Infrastructure, and we crossed party lines numerous times to work together to do what was best for the city of Jacksonville and North Florida. I almost said Georgia because I know that my colleague is here, and he is going to speak from Georgia, but her roots came from Georgia. She came from a political family. One could tell she was a lady, a southern lady.

We all must pass this way, but, hopefully, when we do, we can look back on all of the things that Tillie Fowler has done, not just for the community but for the entire country, to make this place a better place because Tillie Fowler has passed here. When you are born, you get a birth certificate. And when you die, you get a death certificate. And the only thing that really matters is that dash on your tombstone in between. Tillie, let the work she has done speak for her because she has done a great job for our community.

I was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden passing of my former colleague, Tillie Fowler. My prayers and deepest regrets go out to her and her immediate family, Buck, and her two girls, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth.

Tillie and I shared a lot in common. In fact, in 1992, we came up to Washington together as members of the same class of elected representatives. This class was so dynamic, and filled with so many new and soon to be influential women members, that it was referred to as ''The Year of the Woman.''

One distinct adjective to describe Tillie is that she was a tremendous fighter. She struggled hard for what she believed in, and for the betterment of the people and the region she served. Above all, Tillie loved her country, and fought hard to protect the freedoms we enjoy—even the freedom to disagree. Tillie was a woman of great distinction, highly respected, and was always extremely active in her community. She served our country well, particularly in her strong support of the military, specializing in issues concerning women's roles and rights within the military. She was also a woman with strong leadership qualities and one who believed in the value of volunteerism and community service.

I also served with Tillie on the Transportation Committee, and we crossed party lines numerous times to work together to do what was best for the city of Jacksonville and North Florida as a whole.

In closing, my heart and prayers go out to Tillie's dear family during this difficult time.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, Tillie Fowler was a giant in this Congress. Though she served only four terms, 100 percent faithful to her pledge to limit her service in this House, she rose to our elected leadership, and she kept us focused on national security as our highest priority. She was called the Steel Magnolia because she was a hybrid of a southern belle and a marine drill sergeant. She was best known for her roles on the Committee on Armed Services and in the House leadership where she consistently was the voice of the military, calling for a defense

budget and defense resources always sufficient to keep America strong.

It was Tillie's intellect and her willingness to work across the aisle that advanced her to a preeminent position as vice chairwoman of the House Republican Conference and as a deputy minority whip for 6 years. I worked with Tillie in our House leadership and on the House Policy Committee and on such special projects as the Speaker's Working Group on Russia.

Today, as the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I miss Tillie Fowler more than ever because nowhere was her national leadership more in evidence than in her work toward terrorism preparedness. As a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, her top priority was the country's preparedness for a domestic terror attack. She found overlap inadequacies among the Federal agencies, the many agencies that were responsible in those days for terrorism preparedness, and she tried to fix it.

A year and a half before 9/11, she drafted the Preparedness Against Terrorism Act of 2000. If we had followed her farsighted advice, the Congress would have placed top priority on elevating and consolidating the Federal Government's anti-terrorism efforts by creating a Presidential Council on Domestic Terrorism Preparedness. Tillie's legislation was not passed in the 106th Congress, but we soon came to realize through the tragic events of 9/11 that her focus and her proposed reforms were vitally necessary. As a result, many of her recommended reforms are included in what is now law, the Homeland Security Act.

She was truly the guardian angel of our national security. Tillie Fowler, our friend and colleague, dedicated her life to her community and our Nation. It was an honor to serve with her, and it will be an honor to carry on her work to ensure that America is always prepared so we may be always free. Our prayers are with her husband, Buck; with her daughters, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth; and with her entire family.

Tillie Fowler was a giant in this Congress. Though she served only four terms—100 percent faithful to her pledge to limit her service in this House—she rose to the Leadership of our ranks, and kept us focused on our national security as our highest priority.

She was called the "Steel Magnolia"—because she was a hybrid of a Southern belle and a Marine drill sergeant.

She was best known for her roles on the Armed Services Committee and in the House Leadership, where she was consistently the voice of the military, calling for a defense budget sufficient to ensure a strong America.

It was Tillie's intellect, and willingness to work across the aisle, that advanced her to a preeminent position of leadership as Vice Chairwoman of the House Republican Conference, and as a deputy majority whip for six years.

I had the wonderful opportunity to serve with Tillie in the elected Leadership, on the House Policy Committee, and on such vital national security projects as the Speaker's Advisory Group on Russia.

Today, as the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I miss Tillie Fowler more than ever, because nowhere was her national leadership more in evidence than in her work toward terrorism preparedness.

As a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, her top priority was the country's preparedness for a domestic terrorist attack. She found overlap and inadequacies among the several federal agencies with jurisdiction over terrorism preparedness, and she tried to fix it.

A year and a half before 9/11, she drafted the "Preparedness Against Terrorism Act of 2000." If we had followed her far sighted advice, the Congress would have placed top priority on elevating and consolidating the federal government's anti-terrorism efforts by creating a Presidential Council on Domestic Terrorism Preparedness.

Tillie's legislation was not passed in the 106th Congress, but we soon came to realize—through the tragic events of 9/11—that her focus and her proposed reforms were vitally necessary. As a result, many of her proposed reforms were included in the Homeland Security Act, which is now law. She was truly the guardian angel of our national security.

Tillie Fowler, my friend and colleague, dedicated her life to her community and her nation. It was an honor to serve with her, and it will be an honor to carry on her work to ensure that America is always prepared, so that we may be always free.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my thoughts in remembrance of our dear friend and colleague, Tillie Fowler. I pay tribute to her, her service here, the events in her life that made her who she was with respect to her family and her community. I knew her here in this place.

I first got to know Tillie through her friendship with my late husband, Congressman Walter Capps. Walter and Tillie served only 10 months together before his death in 1997, and it might have appeared that they did not have much in common, but, in fact, they did. Tillie had been elected to a district that had been represented by a Democrat for 42 years. Walter's district had been represented by Republicans for 50 years. Both Tillie and Walter understood that it was more important to try to reach bipartisan solutions than to engage in partisan politics.

□ 2030

Even as she rose through the ranks of her party's leadership, and that has been attested to this evening, a strong and loyal leader within the Republican Conference, Tillie always tried to work across the aisle on issues that were important to her. One such issue where again she worked closely with my husband, Walter, was her support for the humanities. Like Walter, Tillie had once served as her State's humanities chair. And back in the days when funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities was in the crosshairs of congressional budget cutters, Tillie stood up to protect that program. The fact that support for the NEH is now stronger than ever in Congress is due in no small part to all of Tillie's efforts a few years ago.

She also helped to pioneer the bipartisan nature of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues. Here again, she tried to bring Members of both parties together to address the serious issues affecting American women, and she bravely challenged her own party leaders to moderate their relentless focus on reproductive rights.

After leaving the House, Tillie combined her military expertise with her support for women's rights when she headed up the panel to review sexual misconduct at the Air Force Academy. She also served on the panel charged with investigating prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib. These difficult assignments demonstrated Tillie's belief that we can best support our military by uncovering the truth and ensuring that these horrible scandals never be allowed to repeat themselves.

Tillie Fowler was a very proud Republican, and her party can be honored and proud of her. But she did not put her party over her principles. During one particularly tough election that I was engaged in, my opponent announced that Tillie had endorsed and would campaign for him. But she came up to me on the floor one day and told me that it was not true. As Eleanor Clift just wrote in her heartfelt Newsweek obituary, Tillie always said, "I can't sit next to them one day and campaign against them the next. If I'm your friend, then I'm your friend."

We will all dearly miss our friend Tillie and we mourn today that there simply are not enough people like her. She will be missed, and she will always be remembered with great honor.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the right honorable gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as so many of the viewers of CSPAN know by now, we are here today in great sadness but also in great joy that we celebrate a wonderful life exemplified by Tillie Fowler. We came together last week when we announced the unexpected death of Tillie Fowler, who passed away at the age of 62; but she made such a strong imprint on the lives of so many and on the lives of this House.

Tillie, as we have heard, was a fiercely loyal, dedicated public servant from our home State of Florida, a true crusader for the citizens of our State and especially for all who served in our Armed Forces, the men and women in uniform. She fought hard, especially for the women serving in the military so that they would be treated fairly, so that they would be free from sexual harassment, so they would be free from discrimination. During her four terms in Congress, Tillie became the highest-

ranking woman in the House leadership.

She possessed a quiet tenacity. She had the grace and the strength to rise above partisan differences and to continuously reach across the aisle in a true spirit of unity, as we just heard from my good friend from California (Mrs. CAPPS) who really showed that in a very clear way. Tillie was an outstanding member of our Florida team. She was a true asset to our community. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to have served in the House of Representatives with her.

I think it is most appropriate, Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate this week, which is the Stop Violence Against Women Week, that we celebrate Tillie's life and Tillie's work here in Congress, because through her tireless efforts, she worked to protect women from all types of injustices. During her short tenure in Congress, she and I worked together on a number of important women's issues, such as breast cancer research, the protection of our environment, the security of our women, so many issues that we were involved with.

All of us in the House extend our heartfelt condolences to Tillie's beloved husband, Buck; to their two beautiful daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth; and to the rest of her loving family. Our thoughts and our prayers are with all of you during this difficult time.

Thank you, Tillie, for your gentle leadership. You were a true friend to me, to our Florida community, to all whose lives you touched. You will be greatly missed. Our country is safer today because of Tillie's hard work, and the women who are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces are better protected because of your efforts, Tillie. Tillie leaves a strong legacy of service with honor, and it was my honor to call her my friend.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the honorable gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that we accept the loss of our good friend Tillie Kidd Fowler. Shakespeare wrote: ''All the world's a stage and all the men and women are merely players. Each has an entrance and an exit. One in her time may play many parts.''

So it was with Tillie. Tillie was the daughter of Senator and Mrs. Culver Kidd. She was, of course, sister to Rusty. She had another sibling who now lives in Macon, Georgia. Tillie grew up in Milledgeville, and she had politics in her DNA. Her father, Culver Kidd, a Yellow Dog Democrat, served under the gold dome in Atlanta for more than 3 decades. I had the good fortune of calling Culver friend and mentor; and when I was elected to Congress in 1992, Culver called to congratulate me, but he said, ''I want you to meet my daughter. She was elected, also.'' As soon as I got here, I had the good fortune to meet Tillie, and we became friends. Although we were on different sides of the aisle, when I had a difficult election, Tillie came over and said, how can I help? And she did help. She was very, very, very savvy, just as her father and her brother were; and she has been a true public servant.

Tillie and I shared the fact that both of us attended Emory University Law School. Both of us were selected to be among that distinguished group called the Distinguished Alumni. She and I join others who are blessed to have had our portraits hanging in the law school. Each year, about this time, we cohosted a reception for the newly elected students from the Washington, D.C. area to the Emory Law School. That reception is coming up soon.

But most importantly, Tillie was a friend to me and that friendship was because of my friendship with her father and her brother. Just a couple of weeks ago when I was in Atlanta, I ran into her brother and I inquired about Tillie, and he told me she was doing fine. Little did we know that we would be coming here tonight to say these wonderful things about Tillie because she had gone.

All the world is a stage and all the men and women are players. Tillie served in so many capacities. She was wife to Buck and mother to Tillie and Elizabeth. But through all of that, she touched our lives in so many ways. We are sad and only one who has worn the garment of bereavement can truly understand the pain that comes when one has been taken from the midst. Yet as we reflect prayerfully, our pain must turn into joy because truly all of us have been blessed to know, love and to have shared this life with such a wonderful woman as Tillie Kidd Fowler.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield to the honorable gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Jacksonville for leading this session in memory of our dear friend Tillie Fowler. I had the opportunity to first meet Tillie after I was elected to the House in 1992, the same year that she was. I found her to be a wonderful woman with a kind heart, but also a firm conviction who stood up strongly for her beliefs.

We found that we had many things in common. It turned out that we had a number of friends that we shared that we did not know anything about until we found each other here. My niece and her husband were dorm parents at Choate School in Connecticut where Tillie's children attended, and we shared many a story about that. She had friends in my congressional district in Lynchburg, Virginia, who were very dear to her and I found that I had friends in Florida that she knew as well.

One day I was driving through a car wash in my hometown of Roanoke, Virginia, and the car in front of me had a Tillie Fowler for Congress bumper sticker. This was right after the election in 1992. I had to stop the lady and tell her that I had just met Tillie and knew her. It turned out this was a very, very close friend of Tillie's who had moved to my district.

So it is with much sadness that I join my colleagues this evening in paying tribute to former Congresswoman Fowler, a devoted mother and wife, a public servant, a dear friend, and a woman of impeccable virtue and integrity, a truly remarkable woman. It seems as though Tillie succeeded in everything she attempted. She attended and graduated from Emory University and then Emory University Law School. After graduation she came to work as a congressional aide and then went on to serve as general counsel in the White House Office of Consumer Affairs from 1970 to 1971, after which she returned home to focus on her new family and volunteer activities. She was elected to the Jacksonville City Council in 1985 and served until 1992 when she successfully ran for Congress and served for 8 years.

In Congress, Tillie was the fifth-ranking Republican in the House of Representatives and served 6 years as the deputy conference chair. She also served on the House Committee on Armed Services where she was a strong advocate of the Navy. After serving in Congress, she continued her service to the country and served as a leader in Washington as an attorney with the Washington office of Holland & Knight.

Tillie and I both came to Congress in 1993, and we shared many stories all through the years that we served together. My sincerest sympathies are extended to Tillie's family. I hope that it comforts you to know that Tillie lived her life to the fullest and she did so with graciousness and integrity. She had, as I said, a kind heart and a firm conviction. She represented her constituents with dedication, tenacity, and fairness. For that reason, she earned the respect of her colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and she will be sincerely missed. It is my prayer that her family and the deep loss that they are suffering now will overcome that and have many, many, many fond memories of a wonderful and delightful woman who blessed all who ever knew her.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the honorable gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues here tonight because we are all deeply saddened by the loss of our former colleague and dear friend, Tillie Fowler. I first met Tillie in December of 1992. We were both of the newly elected class of the 103rd Congress. It was during that incoming freshman class that we met for the first time. We were to meet in this big room. As I came through that door, I was 32 years old. I did not even know where the bathrooms were. The first person I see

is this lady who is very gracious with these very large glasses with the most beautiful smile, and I knew that this had to be a Southern belle. Boy, was I right. I went over, immediately attracted to that smile, and we started talking. Then somebody called the meeting to order and Tillie and I sat down next to each other.

□ 2045

And what a beginning of a great relationship. Ironically, we were then appointed both to the House Armed Services Committee and were assigned committee seats then right next to each other.

During our tenure on the Armed Services Committee, I came to know and appreciate and respect the loyalty, dedication and hard work of Tillie. Although Tillie never served in the military, she understood and subscribed to the very same core values that I had been inculcated with and advocated by all members of the uniformed services.

To that end, we shared the same values and beliefs: Duty, honor, courage, commitment to God, country, family, and our fellow human beings. And for that, the Armed Services reciprocated in their love toward her.

In short, Tillie Fowler's values reflected a common theme of unswerving devotion and honorable service. As members of the Committee on Armed Services, we are faced with very difficult issues that would have and that in fact had a significant impact on military readiness.

JANE HARMAN, Tillie Fowler and I worked together on the Speaker's Task Force on Gender Training, a commission that reviewed the politically sensitive issues of coed training in the military services and the issues of sexual harassment in the military and sexual assaults.

Tillie and I fought hard together in order to try to prevent the closure of the Department of the Navy's live-fire trying range in Vieques in Puerto Rico. I also supported Tillie in her belief of a second port for CVNs to replace the carrier John F. Kennedy in Jacksonville.

And when it came to developing the TRICARE for life program for the over 65 military retirees, it was Tillie that I turned to who quietly assisted me in gaining the support of the Speaker and other Congressional leaders in this program.

Through it all, Tillie repeatedly distinguished herself with a sense of justice and always sound judgment. Her resolve and tenacity were always focused on ensuring that our military forces were physically, mentally and operationally prepared for war. She was known for her superior knowledge, her ethics and both physical and moral courage.

Above else, she was a woman of integrity and great dignity. It is individuals like Tillie that give the American system of Government, indeed this legislative body, honor and respect.

My friend will be remembered in history as one of the world's iron ladies, like Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, Tillie Fowler and others. As a colleague, she was a confidant and a true inspiration, someone that you could always turn to in a very difficult moment.

And Tillie always seemed to say the right words. She was like a human sponge. She would soak up and be such a great listener, and then she would always convey the right words, and you would walk by feeling good about yourself that you now have a direction, and she would do that in such warm personal leadership.

I am grateful for the time that we spent together in this chamber and thankful for the memories that she will leave with me. I am a better person for having known her, and the country is a better place through her efforts.

To her husband, Buck, and her daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth, I extend my heartfelt sympathy. To my friend Tillie, I know you are in heaven; vouch for me, my dear friend, so I may see you again.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield now to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise today to share a few remarks about my friend, our friend, the Honorable Tillie Fowler, who served with honor and distinction in this House. I shall remember her as someone with enormous capacity, inclusive and fiercely loyal to her friends on both sides of the aisle. Her sacred belief while serving in Congress was, I cannot sit next to them one day and campaign against them the next.

What a lady. If I am your friend, then I am your friend. As the politics around her grew more partisan and unkind through her tenure here, Tillie held her ground. She knew that, in order to get things done, she had to do away with partisan rancor. She was never reluctant to embrace an idea she felt strongly about.

She had a tiny frame, but a great heart and a giant heart. She was a good soul. Tillie wanted more women to get involved in politics and championed the issues women care so much about. She challenged us all of the time with a question: Does it matter whether women are involved in politics? Her career exemplifies that answer.

Upon entering Congress in 1992, Tillie was elected co-chairwoman of the Freshman Republican Task Force on Reform. And in her second term, she became a deputy whip for the Republicans. She was elected vice chairwoman of the House Republican Conference on the vow that she would serve no longer than 2 years in the Republican leadership.

When she left Congress in 2001, she was number five in the House leadership. Tillie served with distinction on the Armed Services Committee, which led the former Speaker, Newt Gingrich, to give her and Representative JANE HARMAN the tough assignment of investigating sexual harassment in the Army.

Her experience on defense matters was not limited to gender issues. And she earned respect as an authority on a range of essential military issues. In 1998, it was indeed my privilege to ask Tillie Fowler to join me, as we would have the first memorial wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Ceremony honoring women in military service from the American Revolutionary Army until the present.

In subsequent years, Tillie never missed the annual occasion to stand with us women of the House at Arlington to honor current and past servicewomen. For all of us who will gather together again this May in Arlington, Tillie's absence will be felt and regretted. But she stands among the greatest of women of this country.

I think Tillie Fowler's career is a reminder of what we need to be about, a shining example for all women, civilian or in the military, seeking opportunities to become the best that one can be, to their families, to their Nation. Tillie Fowler was that lady. She will be sorely missed. My condolences go to her husband, Buck, and her two daughters.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield now to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. HARRIS).

(Ms. HARRIS asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the gentleman from Jacksonville for hosting such an honorable memory to Tillie Fowler.

Mr. Speaker, America lost a remarkable leader last week. The people of Florida lost a passionate and effective ally, and our brave men and women in uniform lost a stellar advocate. I lost a dear friend.

Congresswoman Tillie Fowler was much more than a role model for women who followed her into public service. Though her trail-blazing example and her indomitable spirit will always inspire us, she was much more than northwest Florida's greatest promoter. Through her service, her dedication to the people will always guide us.

She was much more than a trusted colleague, to members of both parties, and her unimpeachable standard of honor and integrity will always instruct us.

In fact, today, I was even speaking with one of her colleagues at Holland & Knight, and we said, you know, we feel like she is still here, we can still see her smile, we can still see those big glasses, we can still hear her laughter. Not often does someone leave you and you still feel them so strongly.

Tillie Fowler's contributions as a public servant, as an attorney, as a civic volunteer and, most important, as a beloved wife and mother were routinely extraordinary. Why? Because at every stage of her life, she had the

courage to follow common sense and uncommon dreams.

Whether she was graduating as one of five women at Emory University Law School's class of 1967, or successfully challenging a political establishment dominated by male Democrats, Tillie Fowler never met a barrier that she could not shatter.

Yet, while fighting relentlessly for her principles for Florida and for America, she never lost her love of humanity, her charity or her grace.

Mr. Speaker, as we offer our prayers and condolences to her husband of 37 years, Buck, and her two lovely daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth, let us honor Congresswoman Tillie Fowler's memory by elevating our purpose as well as the means we choose to achieve it.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield now to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, too, as a fellow Floridian would like to pay tribute tonight to my friend, Tillie Fowler.

Tillie was a role model, not just for the women who followed in her footsteps, but for all of us who attempt to represent our communities and our Nation with dignity and respect.

Through hard work and perseverance, Tillie was a true trail-blazer, one of five women in her class of 106 from Emory University's law school. She was the first female president of the Jacksonville City Council. As we recounted here tonight, in her 8 years in Congress, Tillie rose to the highest rungs of power in the United States Congress in the Republican Caucus.

But, in my opinion, what made Tillie so powerful and so special was not the positions that she held, it was the fact that she never lost sight of who she was here to serve. She never forgot where she came from. She relentlessly fought for the people she represented. She served the country. She served her community.

It was not just Tillie's resume that was impressive; it was her firm stance on the issues. When Tillie dug in, she dug in. She stood her ground. But she always treated everybody with respect. Regardless of whether they agreed with her or not, she always listened. She treated folks at home that way. She treated everybody that way, including Members of Congress.

And Tillie always kept her word. Probably one of the most difficult tests for Tillie was her decision to honor her 8-year term limit pledge. She was a person of her word. Regrettably, this Congress lost her much too soon. We have lost her much too soon on this earth.

Tip O'Neill once said, the sign of a successful politician is, from the time they start to when they finish their career, they have the same spouse, same home, same set of friends. He could have been talking about Tillie Fowler. Tillie was the same person from the day she was an adult to the day she left Congress. She never forgot who she was.

Tillie was also one of those rare Members of Congress whose service to the country and to the world only grew after she left the United States Congress. As has been recounted here tonight, she served on the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee. She took charge of some very serious investigations about potential sexual abuse, about sexual misconduct, about prisoner abuse.

Tillie has been called, by many people here tonight and in the past and she will continue to be referred to as truly a steel magnolia. She was a powerful, delicate balance of grace and strength. She was fair in pursuing her goals, but always friendly, always warm, always caring, always time for a gentle word to a friend or colleague.

For these reasons, Floridians will always treasure, we will always appreciate, we will never forget the legacy of Tillie Fowler.

On behalf of my community, the Tampa Bay area, Tillie, thanks for your service. Thanks for being who you were. Thanks for the power of your example.

And to your husband, Buck, and to your daughters, thank you for sharing a precious amount of the too short life of your mother and your wife here with us in the United States Congress.

Mr. CRENSHAW. I yield now to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM).

Mr. PUTNAM. I thank my friend and colleague from Jacksonville and the successor to Tillie Fowler's great 4th District in Florida. And I appreciate the opportunity that you have given us all to share our feelings and our remembrances of this lovely woman.

And I think how sad it is that we so often save our kindest words for those that we love and care so deeply for until it is too late.

It is an honor to pay tribute today to a great Floridian, a woman who touched so many lives, including my own, and dedicated herself to making our State and our Nation a better place.

Congresswoman Tillie Fowler was a remarkable woman. She was an inspiration to us all, and she sought to bring out the very best in each and every American. Her optimism was contagious, as she brought a sunny disposition to the greatest of tasks and backed it up with a steel will.

Tillie was a public servant, in the truest sense of the word, who not only served her community in the Sunshine State but also her Nation. In the 8 years she spent in the halls of Congress, she earned a reputation as one of the hardest-working and most effective Members of this House.

□ 2100

After leaving this House, her service continued. In fact, I think it is a testimony to her abilities that some of her greatest challenges were given to her after she had retired from the House, as through her service she continued to support a strong and modern military through her chairmanship of the Defense Policy Board and every other difficult task that the Secretary could pass her way.

We all mourn the loss of Tillie Fowler. Her distinguished leadership and grace will be dearly missed and her accomplishments and her legacy will be with us always. Tillie blessed our Nation through her hard work and her generous nature. My thoughts and prayers are with her family, her husband, Buck, and her two daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth.

May we all be worthy of the honor that she bestowed upon this House, and may we all work hard to maintain and to follow that blazing trail which she cut through for us.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, it is clear from what we have heard tonight the great esteem in which Tillie Fowler was held in this House. We have heard about her service in the community, we have heard about her service in local politics, and we have heard about her service here in the United States House of Representatives, as well as when she left this place. So I would simply say in closing that we all loved Tillie, we all will miss Tillie.

One of the things was, in spite of all the honors and accomplishments that came about in her short life, she was always just a great friend. As I said, I never had a chance to serve in this body with her because I took her place when she left, but knowing her for 35 years and watching her in the community, seeing how hard she worked, observing all the things that people have talked about tonight, it is just so clear the legacy that she leaves behind.

I can remember just a couple of occasions, once when she came to see me when she was going to run for the city council. She said, What do you think? I lived in that particular district; my brother had represented that area. I said, Tillie, it would just be magnificent if you would do that. You have been involved in the community; you have done so much. What a great service you would be. I said, You are going to be a star, I can just tell. I know you.

She became one of the first women to serve on our city council, the first Republican president of the city council, the first woman to be president of the city council. Then she went on to serve in this body. I think most people know she left in 2000 after serving for 8 years, not because she would not have been reelected overwhelmingly, but because she made a promise to the people in her district that she would only serve for four terms. It would have been very easy for her to decide that people needed her. She would have won overwhelmingly. But, true to who she was, she made a commitment and she kept it. It was as simple as that.

When I decided to run in 2000, I will never forget the night that I called Tillie to say, in a strange set of circumstances all this kind of came about, I said, I have decided to run in

the seat that you are going to vacate. You could feel this sense of excitement and enthusiasm over the telephone, that somebody that she had known for 35 years, and I am honored to say she believed in me, not only just helped me in the campaign, but paved the way for me in this body, to bring me up, introduce me to her friends, her colleagues, many whom you have heard tonight, just went out of her way to go above and beyond. That is just the kind of person she was.

She did everything wholeheartedly. She came to see me the last Friday, the following Monday is when she had the stroke, but true to form, she came to see me just to visit, to talk about things. She was almost like another Representative from the fourth district. She never stopped serving the people. We talked about issues that were important, and how she could help and ''here are some ideas.'' Always, always on the go.

So, tonight we are sad. We will miss her. She will be missed. She will be missed not only by her family, she will be missed not only by her friends, not only by the people of Florida, but she will be missed by the people of this Nation whom she so proudly served.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, America has lost a great public servant and a gracious lady.

When I became Speaker, Tillie Fowler was there with me at the leadership table, serving as the Republican Conference Vice-Chair.

But despite the burden of her many responsibilities, she always had time to be a friend.

She was an effective legislator because she always kept her word to her colleagues and constituents.

She rose within the Republican leadership and became one of the most powerful women in Congress. Despite her influence—she kept her word and honored her term limits pledge because she had promised her constituents she would serve no more than four terms.

After leaving Congress, she continued to devote herself to public service by serving on critical commissions related to her area of expertise in national defense.

Her selflessness and service to her community and family are the legacies she leaves behind.

The House is a better institution because of people like Tillie Fowler. We will miss her greatly.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to her husband Buck and her two daughters Elizabeth and Tillie.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I discuss the life of the late Congresswoman Tillie Fowler. I knew Tillie during the eight years she served in the House of Representatives and remember vividly her strong work as a member of the House Transportation Committee. I join my colleagues in mourning her loss.

Tillie Fowler was born into a family with a tradition of leadership and service. Her father was a member of the Georgia legislature for 44 years. He urged her to go to law school because he had seen widowed women during the Depression unable to get a job and earn a decent living.

Following her graduation from law school, she worked as a House aide and as a general counsel in the White House Office of Consumer Affairs.

As Vice Chairwoman of the House Republican Conference—number 5 in House leadership—she represented her constituents well and with distinction. She was a tireless advocate for a strong national defense, which was natural for her because her district was in the midst of several naval installations. Out of Congress she sustained her interest in the Armed Forces by serving on several influential panels. As always, she brought passion and professionalism to these difficult tasks.

I had occasion to work with her as a member of the Transportation Committee. I remember her as cordial and gracious, but always intensely passionate about the needs of her constituents. These traits helped her get the nickname ''Steel Magnolia.''

I join my colleagues in mourning the death of Tillie Fowler. She was a strong leader and good friend to all of us. On behalf of the people of the Third District of West Virginia, I extend condolences to her husband Buck and two daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are here to honor the memory of a woman whose life may not have been rich in the years that we all hope and pray for, but who enriched the lives of so many. Tillie Fowler's career was filled with accomplishments, and hear calling was to serve all: her family, her hometown, her state, her country, and her God.

Many glowing words have been used to describe Tillie's attributes this past week: bright, charismatic, determined, gracious, thoughtful, kind, unrelenting. Every one of them is true. There have been few political careers quite like hers, but thanks to her pioneering spirit, many paths have been charted to follow.

Tillie was a woman of deep conviction. No issue mattered more greatly to her than the security of our nation. She cared deeply about our servicemembers, and she acted on that concern during her tenure of service on the House Armed Services Committee. Tillie's trademark steadfastness could be seen in her unfailing support for a well-trained and well-equipped military. One small part of her legacy can be seen in this time of challenge for our country, when we are calling upon the skill and bravery of our people in uniform. We're realizing the quality force that Tillie Fowler helped to build. All Americans are grateful to our military, and I know that all branches of the service are grateful to their faithful and advocate from the Sunshine State.

I don't believe that Tillie ever once took her office or her consitutents for granted. She were sincerely grateful for the chance to serve, and we saw that gratitude every day in her work ethic. Rarely has this body seen a Member who studies so tirelessly that with which she was responsible. Legislative Council once told her staff that they'd never seen a Member pore so intently over draft bill text! But this was indicative of the life of steady, consistent, and unfailing effort that she led on behalf of Jacksonville and the state of Florida. She was the embodiment of the Teddy Roosevelt quote that she favored repeating. ''Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.''

And to watch Tillie serve her fellow man, from her days in the Nixon White House to the halls of Congress, between and beyond, one might have thought she found even the smallest task worth doing, and that she believed she'd won that prize. Yes, she was a lady of firsts; first woman to serve as President of the Jacksonville City Council; amongst the first handful of female colleagues on the Armed Services Committee; the highest ranking woman in Congress within just six years of arriving—in this institution built on seniority and tenure of service. And her groundbreaking achievements continued as she accepted and executed great responsibility at the behest of Secretary Rumsfeld. But as Tillie Fowler walked with giants, she never lost the common touch.

That may perhaps be her greatest legacy to us all. Even as she balanced her many duties, Tillie found the time to pay tribute to our Pages from the House floor. Because of the deep, personal interest she took in the lines of her staff, they remained extremely loyal, staying with her for many years.

It's evident that her attention to detail transcended paper and pencil; Tillie offered tremendous attention to the details of people's lives. Last week's Jacksonville Times-Union guestbook is a testament; everyone from Secretary of the Navy Gordon England, to those who checked her out at the supermarket, remembered Tillie's humaneness and genuine interest. One Jacksonville resident said, ''Mrs. Fowler . . . obtained information on my father's WWII service for which I will always be grateful. When she left office she made sure that the process was completed by her successor. While she impacted this nation in so many positive ways, her attention to the details of one small request gives her a special place in the hearts of my family.''

We can take a lesson from this. And our contribution to Tillie's legacy should be to continue her work here in Congress. Her remarks at the 1995 National Prayer breakfast can guide us:

> For a Member of Congress, Washington can be a dangerous place, not because of crime, although that exists, but because every day we face the possibility of losing our perspective, of becoming tangled in the snares of business, partisanship and self-importance that lie all around us and which distract us from remembering why we are here. . . . In the mist of all the sound and fury it is very easy and very human to get carried away by some personal or partisan agenda and forget about the importance of actually accomplishing something constructive on behalf of the people who sent us to Washington.

It is statements like this that reflect why Tillie will be remembered not just as a conscientious public servant, but also as a human being who was unfailingly courteous and had a kind word for everyone she ever met. Regardless of party or point of view, we will always remember her with fondness and respect.

Tillie Fowler managed to fit an extraordinary amount of living and human impact in sixty-two years. She was a beloved wife, mother, sister, friend, and American patriot. Her name will live on in American history, and in the memory of all who were privileged to know her. While we mourn her passing, we take comfort in knowing that another chapter has just begun, and that this chapter will be far longer than the days she spent on this Earth.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to participate in the tributes in memory of former Congresswoman Tillie Fowler. Although she retired before I entered Congress, I was fortunate to work with her

while campaigning for my predecessor, former Congressman Floyd Spence. As Spence Campaign Manager in 1998, I learned firsthand of Tillie's warm and convincing personality. Her enthusiastic endorsement of Congressman Spence made her a hero of the Second District of South Carolina and propelled Congressman Spence to tremendous victory.

Tillie was a gracious friend and diligent public servant. She once remarked that she tried to live by her father's guidance ''don't try to be popular. Just do the right thing.'' In following his advice, she became one of the most well respected and effective members of Congress. Through her quiet tenacity and steady leadership, Tillie solved difficult problems and achieved tremendous successes. She was committed to protecting Florida's bases, helping America's military families, and enabling our men and women in uniform to successfully defend our country. As we fight the War on Terrorism today, Tillie's accomplishments are more relevant than ever.

True to her word, Tillie retired after eight years of service in the House of Representatives. She continued to serve her country as Chairman of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee. She was awarded the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest civilian awards given by the Navy and the Department of Defense.

Tillie also possessed an extraordinary sense of purpose and a profound understanding of what matters most in life. Her dedication to her family and her friends was possibly her most admirable quality. She will be greatly missed. My thoughts and prayers go out to Buck and her daughters, Elizabeth and Tillie.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the memory of a dear colleague. I first met Tillie Fowler when I came to Congress in 1995. Tillie always stood out as someone Members could admire. The more we worked together, the more I grew to admire her. She always took time to give advice—no matter how busy she was.

Tillie would stick to her convictions regardless of who disagreed with her. Yet, at the same time, she was also very warm and friendly. Due to these characteristics Tillie earned the nickname ''Steel Magnolia,'' which I thought really suited her.

Tillie was a staunch supporter of strengthening the defense of our country. She was also a strong conservative who wanted government to stop interfering in people's lives. Due to her strong stances and warm personality, Tillie was chosen as one of our top Republican Leaders; a position she filled with grace and wisdom.

To those of us who knew Tillie, simple words or speeches cannot describe her. Nor can they speak enough about the woman she was. I will always remember Tillie as more than just a colleague during my years here. I will remember her as a good friend.

May God bless Tillie and her family, and may we not forget the contributions she has made to our country.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, when former U.S. Representative Tillie Fowler passed away last week, we lost an inspiration, a mentor, a patriot, and a friend. From the time she first came to Congress, Tillie Fowler was committed above all else to serving the American people. Her warm manner, unmistakable intelligence, clear understanding of defense policy, and obvious love for her country helped her quickly rise to a position of influence within the party. Despite her great responsibilities, Congresswoman Fowler remained deeply rooted in her community, and committed to those individuals she was elected to represent.

Tillie Fowler demonstrated to us all what a noble calling public service can be; and she still serves as an inspiration to many of us today, myself included. With the passing of Tillie Fowler, we truly lost one of the brightest stars the Sunshine State ever had to offer. Her legacy and influence will not be forgotten, for we are forever indebted to her for all that she was able to accomplish.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to place into the RECORD a tribute to honor former Representative Tillie Kidd Fowler, who passed away unexpectedly on March 2, 2005.

Tillie was not only an extraordinary leader and a dedicated public servant, she was also a dear and loyal friend.

Tillie and I came to the Congress together in 1993, and worked together on many issues during the eight years she served her constituents in the communities of Jacksonville, Florida. Tillie was kind, intelligent and thoughtful. She put aside partisanship and politics for the good of the American people. Too few today speak with courtesy and respect when in disagreement with a colleague on important issues, but Tillie always did. These attributes earned her enormous respect among Republicans and Democrats alike, and undoubtedly played a role in her rise to Chairwoman of the House Republican Conference, placing her fifth in the Republican leadership hierarchy.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, Tillie was a champion of a strong national defense and worked tirelessly to improve military culture in the U.S. and abroad. She continued this good work after her retirement from Congress in 2001, serving on the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee where she aided the Secretary of Defense on strategy and policy matters. She also served on several panels to investigate allegations of discrimination and sexual misconduct at the U.S. Air Force Academy, as well as prisoner abuse in Iraq. Her work to improve our nation's military is second to none and she will be remembered for her role in eliminating intimidation, discrimination, harassment and assault from the culture of our military.

The State of Florida, our nation and those of us who are Members of Congress have lost a true friend and wonderful leader.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary life of Tillie Fowler and in extending our deepest sympathies to her beloved husband Buck, their daughters Tillie and Elizabeth, and their entire family.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues today in paying special tribute to a unique patriot and a great American. Tillie Fowler was known as a ''Steel Magnolia'' because she was a grand class act with enormous strength of character.

Tillie and I worked together on a host of defense-related issues, including the Depot Caucus which I co-chair. In a world of Republicans and Democrats who often see only the worst in each other, Tillie stood out as a hard-nosed realist and a reliable partner for any Member of Congress who stood with her on an issue.

She didn't see party affiliation as the most important aspect of a colleague; she judged each of us individually, by how we worked on issues important to Florida, the district she represented, and to the nation.

We served together on the House Armed Services Committee, and we traveled together on behalf of the House of Representatives. She cared deeply about the national security of the United States and about her constituents in Florida.

She was a remarkable public servant; she broke the mold, becoming the first woman and first Republican to serve as council President of the Jacksonville City Council in 1985. She was a woman of her word—here in Congress and with the people she represented so well here.

When she first ran, she pledged to only serve here for 6 years. Very few members who make such a pledge actually keep it in the end. But Tillie did. She was as good as her word on any matter. She made the most of her service here, becoming the 5th ranking Republican in the House by 2000.

After she left the House, she remained actively engaged in matters of national defense. In 2001 she was appointed to the Defense Policy Advisory Board by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. She also continued to be involved in local civic and business affairs.

She always took on the hard issues, investigating sexual assaults at our military academies and torture at prisons in Iraq . . . both difficult and thankless jobs. Tillie was a rare breed—a class act and a scrappy fighter.

Tillie was the picture of grace and compassion. Public service was genetic for her; her father was former Georgia State Sen. Culver Kidd.

I will miss my friend; I fully expected to be working with her in the upcoming BRAC deliberations this year. She was tenacious, she was gracious and she was a beautiful soul. Her family—her husband, Buck, and their daughters—will be in my thoughts and prayers.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden passing of my former colleague, Tillie Fowler. My prayers and deepest regrets go out to her and her immediate family, Buck, and her two girls, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth.

Tillie and I shared a lot in common. In fact, in 1992, we came up to Washington together as members of the same class of elected representatives. This class was so dynamic, and filled with so many new and soon to be influential women members, that it was referred to as ''The Year of the Woman.''

One distinct adjective to describe Tillie is that she was a tremendous fighter. She struggled hard for what she believed in, and for the betterment of the people and the region she served. Above all, Tillie loved her country, and fought hard to protect the freedoms we enjoy—even the freedom to disagree. Tillie was a woman of great distinction, highly respected, and was always extremely active in her community. She served our country well, particularly in her strong support of the military, specializing in issues concerning women's roles and rights within the military. She was also a woman with strong leadership qualities and one who believed in the value of volunteerism and community service.

Even though Tillie worked on the opposite end of the political spectrum, I recognize tremendous contributions Tillie made, and influence she had within the Republican Party. In

1998 in fact, she was chosen by her colleagues within the Republican Party to be the Vice Chairman (or Chairwoman) of the Republican Conference. This honor made her the highest ranking woman in the U.S. Congress at the time she retired, in 2000. She also served for 6 years as Deputy Majority Whip in the Party, paving the way for future women to move up the political ranks here on Capitol Hill.

Moreover, when she obtained a seat on the House Armed Services Committee, she was the only Republican woman at that time on the committee. Given the tremendous influence the military plays in the city of Jacksonville, her appointment to this committee was more than critical. Upon leaving Congress, Tillie worked hard to ensure a strong U.S. military was recognized by the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense. She went on to receive the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award and the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, both of which was the highest civilian awards given by the Navy and DOD.

Additionally, I served with Tillie on the T & I committee, and crossed party lines numerous times to work together and do what was best for the city of Jacksonville and North Florida as a whole.

My heart and prayers go out to Tillie's dear family during this difficult time. They will remain in my thoughts and prayers.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Congresswoman Tillie Fowler, our friend and former colleague who recently passed away.

Tillie Fowler was a unique individual. She was tough. She was smart. She was determined. She was gracious. She was an effective advocate for her Jacksonville-area constituents. She also was a loving wife and devoted mother, as well as a friend of mine.

Born in Georgia as the daughter of a politician, Tillie quickly distinguished herself as a force with which to be reckoned. She earned a law degree from Emory University. She became a congressional aide and White House staffer. She was elected President of the Jacksonville City Council.

Tillie won election to Congress in 1992 and did such a good job that she was unopposed in her three subsequent elections. She became the most powerful woman in Congress during her time here, rising to become Vice Chair of the House Republican Conference. She willingly retired from Congress after serving eight years, though her public service continued until the day she died. Those who knew her remember her wisdom, common sense, fairness, and gentle disposition that could disarm even the most hardened opponent.

Mr. Speaker, Tillie once said that ''I'd rather have people's respect than have them like me.'' I think I speak for all of us when I say that she gained our love, admiration, and respect. I join our colleagues in mourning Congresswoman Tillie Fowler's passing and celebrating her life. I extend my thoughts and prayers to her husband, Buck, and her daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, with the passing of Tillie Fowler, America has lost a great American, dedicated public servant, and friend to many.

Ms. Fowler's distinguished career in public service started as a legislative assistant to Representative Robert J. Stephens, Jr. For the next 37 years, Ms. Fowler served our Nation in many different capacities culminating in her election as a Republican representative in Congress. I had the honor of serving with Ms. Fowler on the Armed Service Committee. I have not known a stronger supporter of national defense, those who serve in the military, and their families.

After leaving Congress, Ms. Fowler remained dedicated to our country. She has done extraordinary work helping lead the commission reviewing sexual harassment at our Nation's military academies. I am pleased that we were able to continue our professional working relationship when Tillie left Congress, and that we were still in touch this year working on mutual issues of interest for the San Diego Airport Authority.

Tillie K. Fowler was not just a colleague, she was a friend. She will truly be missed, by me and a grateful Nation.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues today in this special order tribute to the life and achievements of our former colleague, Congresswoman Tillie Fowler, who passed away suddenly last week.

I had the privilege of serving with Tillie. She was a good person—a woman of honesty and integrity—and a remarkable public servant. She had a distinguished eight-year tenure in the House of Representatives. When she retired in 2001 after a self-imposed four-term limit, she was the highest-ranking woman in the House leadership, serving as the vice chairman of the Republican Conference. She also served for six years as a deputy majority whip.

Representing the area around Jacksonville, Florida, Tillie quickly made a mark in the House after her election in 1992. She obtained a seat on the House Armed Services Committee, the only Republican woman on the committee at that time, enabling her to represent well the military and naval installations in her northern Florida district.

She also served on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and chaired the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Emergency Management, from which she led an investigation of the nation's preparedness for a domestic terrorist attack. Eighteen months before 9/11, she authored legislation that would have centralized federal anti-terrorism efforts. After the 2001 terrorists attacks, many of the reforms she proposed were enacted in the creation of Department of Homeland Security.

She gained a reputation as a knowledgeable and articulate advocate for a strong U.S. military and when she retired from Congress, she received the highest civilian awards given by the U.S. Navy and the Department of Defense—the Navy's Distinguished Public Service Award and the Defense Department's Medal for Distinguished Public Service.

An attorney by profession, Tillie became a Washington-based partner in the Holland & Knight law firm after leaving Congress, but also continued her public service work. She served on the Defense Policy Advisory Committee, later chairing the panel—the first woman to head the board in its 20-year history—which advises the secretary of Defense on strategic planning matters. She also led a panel created by Congress in 2003 to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and was a member of a blue-ribbon panel which advised the Defense secretary last year on issues related to the allegations of prisoner abuse by U.S. military personnel at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Tillie Fowler was a wonderful person, the beloved wife of Buck Fowler of Jacksonville and devoted mother of two daughters, Tillie Fowler of Washington, D.C., and Elizabeth Fowler of San Francisco.

We mourn her sudden passing and offer our deepest sympathies to the Fowler family and the many, many friends and colleagues in both the public and private sectors whose lives were touched and enriched by Tillie Fowler.

DEFENDING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to draw attention to some of the hundreds of letters that I receive every week from constituents who are outraged or frightened by the President's plan to privatize Social Security. Americans of all ages know that the President's private accounts are a risky change that will do nothing to alleviate Social Security's long-term financial pressures. As more details of this plan trickle out of the White House, Americans are not communicating a mandate; they are expressing outrage and fear.

Social Security is the single most successful anti-poverty program in our country's and government's history. I intend to do all that I can to make sure that this program survives this current attack, and I know that millions of Americans are joining in this effort.

I hear from those that I have the honor of representing in Wisconsin's Second Congressional District every day. They write to tell me about their profound concern with this plan, and they also write to tell me about the profound difference that Social Security has made in their lives. They write to share their fears about how privatization could jeopardize their retirement. They write to express frustration that our President has proposed a scheme that would dismantle Social Security, not strengthen it for future generations.

I have come to the floor tonight to share portions of these letters that I receive on a daily basis, and I hope that those who seek to privatize and to dismantle Social Security are listening this evening. I will also be joined by colleagues tonight who wish to share the words and stories of the constituents that they represent with the American public.

I would like to start this evening with excerpts from a few letters concerning the general importance of the Social Security program.

Ann, from Madison, writes: ''I am appalled at the changes suggested for Social Security. If you have known anyone living on it entirely, the monthly