TEXAS STATE SENATOR MARIO GALLEGOS, JR.

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 16, 2012

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor Texas State Senator Mario Gallegos, Jr. For many years, we have worked side by side to help improve the quality of life for many people around the Houston area. He was a champion for education and Latino rights, along with many other numerous issues. Senator Gallegos passed away on October 16th, and the Houston Chronicle printed his obituary. In honor of Senator Gallegos, I would like to submit the text.

State Sen. Mario Gallegos, 62, a Democratic lawmaker whose 22-year career in the Texas Legislature was marked by courage, controversy and dogged commitment to issues of importance to the Hispanic community, died Tuesday afternoon at Methodist Hospital in Houston from complications of liver disease.

Gallegos, the first Hispanic elected to the state Senate from Harris County, took a special interest in public education, redistricting and other issues he believed would have an effect on the lives of the predominantly working-class residents in Senate District 6.

In 2007, only weeks after undergoing a liver transplant, a sick and weakened Gallegos ignored a doctor's call to return to Houston and installed a hospital bed in the office of the Senate sergeant-at-arms so he could cast his vote against a bill requiring voters to show photo identification. Gallegos argued the bill would discriminate against minority voters.

In 2011, Gallegos opposed a measure sponsored by state Sen. Dan Patrick, R–Houston, requiring women seeking an abortion to undergo a sonogram. Gallegos told his fellow senators that although he opposed abortion, he didn't believe he should impose legislative restrictions on a woman about ''how to govern her body.''

''There were few issues that Mario and I agreed upon,'' Patrick said, ''but throughout my six years in the state Senate he always treated me with kindness and courtesy and professionalism. And he was a friend.''

State Sen. Leticia Van de Putte, D–San Antonio, described Gallegos as ''a man of matchless generosity who worked tirelessly for his district. I've never known anyone who fought harder for the underdog—for the most vulnerable in our state.''

Mario Valentin Gallegos Jr. was born in Houston on Sept. 8, 1950, and grew up in Magnolia Park, an East End neighborhood near the Ship Channel. He graduated from Milby High School and received his undergraduate degree from the University of Houston-Downtown in 2001.

Gallegos joined the Houston Fire Department at 18 and served for 22 years, rising to the rank of senior captain. His involvement in union affairs as a firefighter whetted his interest in politics.

''As a union member working with (former Houston City Councilman) Ben Reyes, he fell in love with politics,'' said Marc Campos, a Houston political consultant who met Gallegos in 1979. ''He made a number of trips to Austin to lobby for firefighter issues.''

In 1990, Gallegos was elected to the Texas House of Representatives, where he served for two terms before being elected to the state Senate in 1994. Never a legislative tactician or policy expert, Gallegos was a reliable liberal vote on most issues.

Suffering from cirrhosis of the liver a few months later, he received last rites and made plans for his body to be displayed near the Capitol Rotunda before being transported to his grave in afire truck

With about a month to live, he received a phone call on Jan. 18, 2007, informing him that the unexpected death of a teenage boy meant he would get a liver transplant.

Sworn in as president pro tempore later that year, he told his colleagues that he intended to run for office until he died.

Survivors include his mother, Olga Gallegos; his wife, Theresa Gallegos; three children, Ali Templer, Melissa Gallegos and Mario Elias Gallegos; four sisters and two brothers; and five grandchildren.

HONORING SANDY ZIMMERMAN

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 16, 2012

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of my Congressional Staff who have served with me over the past six years while I have been in office. A Member of Congress' most important responsibility is to provide exceptional constituent services and my staff is second to none in providing the best assistance to everyone in our District. I take great pride in the work that each one has done on my behalf and on behalf of everyone in the 11th Congressional District of North Carolina.

Each District Staff member has shown a strong sense of dedication to meeting the needs of each and every one of our constituents. They often go well beyond the call to make sure each constituent is treated fairly and respectfully by our government agencies and that they receive appropriate resolution. I owe a debt of gratitude to each one of them for the support and friendship which they have shown me while I have served in Congress.

Sandy Zimmerman has served as a member of my District staff since May of 2007. Sandy has provided valuable assistance to individuals living in the far western counties of our District. Often times in the past these individuals have felt overlooked and forgotten because of their remote location to the rest of the District but Sandy has worked tirelessly to attend meetings and forums and make sure that these valuable members of our community have their voices heard and problems addressed. Sandy has time and again stood in the gap for our Western counties and I have been blessed to call her friend and teammate.

Sandy should be proud of the service she has provided to our District and country. It has been an honor to serve with Sandy and as I retire from office I wish her the very best in the future. Western North Carolina is a better place because of her efforts and I will cherish the memories of serving with Sandy and the team by my side.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking Sandy Zimmerman for her hard work on behalf of all of western North Carolina and to wish her continued success in her future endeavors.