EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING JEANETTE ELDRIDGE ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM 42 YEARS OF FEDERAL SERVICE

HON. GLENN C. NYE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 21, 2010

Mr. NYE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Ms. Jeanette Eldridge, of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). Ms. Eldridge is retiring from the U.S. Government with 42 years of service, 32 of those years with NCIS. She started her career with NCIS as a Support Services Clerk (Typing) and has risen steadily through the ranks to her current leadership position as the Field Office Support Officer (FOSO) of the Norfolk Field Office.

Ms. Eldridge has set an outstanding example for government service. She has exceptional technical skills in many areas and a calm and graceful leadership style that make her a role model. She is a proactive manager and sets the standard by which others are measured. She is amazingly effective, while being a careful steward of the public's resources and trust. On behalf of the United States Government, I congratulate Jeanette on her well-deserved retirement and thank her for her service.

TRIBUTE TO MR. JOSEPH W. LUTER III

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 21, 2010

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Joe Luter, on the occasion of his life-long dedication and contributions to Smithfield and Isle of Wight County, Virginia.

Mr. Luter's commitment to the community he has called home for more than 70 years cannot be overstated. As a family man, business owner, community leader and philanthropist, his impact on the lives of thousands of people has been measurable and meaningful.

Mr. Luter graduated from Smithfield High School and went on to attend Wake Forest University, where he graduated from in 1962. Upon his graduation from college, he returned home to work in the family business, Smithfield Packing Company, and served as its president until 1970. After moving to Bayse, Virginia and developing Bryce Mountain Resort, Mr. Luter returned to Smithfield in 1975 as Chairman of the Board and CEO of Smithfield Foods, Inc., where he held that position until 2006.

Under his leadership, Smithfield Foods, Inc. has become a $12.5 billion company that employs over 52,000 people world-wide. Mr. Luter's love for people and his community led to his creation of the Smithfield-Luter Foundation in 2002. In 8 short years, it has granted 74 scholarships worth over $800,000. In addition, it donated $5 million in 2005 to Christopher Newport University, an institution located just a few miles away from the town of Smithfield. In 2006, the Foundation announced a $5 million gift for cancer research and treatment to the University of Virginia Health System in honor of longtime Smithfield employee Palmer Weber.

Tomorrow, the citizens of Smithfield and Isle of Wight County will honor Mr. Luter at the Grand Opening Dedication of Windsor Castle Park, a 210 acre riverside park located in the heart of downtown Smithfield. Mr. Luter's generous contribution made possible the purchase of 162 acres of farmland and development of the park, which he subsequently donated to the Town of Smithfield. Another 46 acres was gifted to the town by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis McMurran. The park includes a woodland trail system, picnic and play areas, a dog park, kayak and canoe launch, scenic overlook and the Windsor Castle Historic Site.

Madam Speaker, please join me and the citizens of Smithfield and Isle of Wight in offering our sincere gratitude to Mr. Luter for his exemplary service and commitment to his community.

THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 21, 2010

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember the end of Sri Lanka's civil war and call attention to the continued plight of the thousands of Sri Lankans who have been affected by the conflict.

One year ago this week, after more than 25 years of violence, the Sri Lankan military declared victory in its major military offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In so doing, it brought an end to one of the most devastating civil wars of the century, offering the Sri Lankan people hope of a brighter future characterized by peace, reconciliation, and economic prosperity for all citizens.

Unfortunately, this hope has yet to be realized. The Sri Lankan military's final offensive against the LTTE left hundreds of thousands of civilians—most of them Tamils—dislocated, deprived of basic necessities, and without effective legal or political recourse. Since the end of the conflict, the Sri Lankan government has blatantly and repeatedly defied the demands of the international community and commonly accepted norms of justice and human rights by failing to reintegrate large numbers of Tamil citizens, denying access by journalists and humanitarian organizations to conflict-affected areas, and detaining former combatants indefinitely.

It has also become apparent that the Sri Lankan military may have committed serious abuses during the fighting itself, including the indiscriminate shelling of areas designated as civilian safe zones. A growing number of respected human rights organizations—including the International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch—have called for an independent international investigation into potential war crimes, yet the Sri Lankan government has yet to open any meaningful inquiry into the allegations.

On this anniversary of the end of the civil war, I call on the government of Sri Lanka to act earnestly and expeditiously to grant safe passage home to the approximately 80,000 Tamil civilians who remain confined to camps, provide ex-combatants with appropriate legal recourse and a path toward reintegration, and end its restrictions on humanitarian and media organizations. It is also past time for the international community to pursue real accountability, including a credible, independent investigation into the potential abuses committed during the 2009 conflict. I urge the Obama Administration to play a leading role in this effort by calling for an investigation at the United Nations and maintaining current restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance to Sri Lanka until the government has demonstrated credible progress toward meeting the international community's demands.

If we do not act soon, this moment of opportunity for lasting peace, justice and reconciliation—which seemed so promising one year ago—may slip away forever.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GEOFF DAVIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 21, 2010

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, May 20, 2010, I was unable to participate in all of the day's votes due to a family emergency.

Had I been present I would have voted: on rollcall No. 289, "yes", H. Res. 1363, Granting the authority provided under clause 4(c)(3) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives to the Committee on Education and Labor for purposes of its investigation into underground coal mining safety; on rollcall No. 290, "yes", H.R. 5128, To designate the Department of the Interior Building in Washington, District of Columbia, as the "Stewart Lee Udall Department of the Interior Building."

ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 21, 2010

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Endangered Species Day. I hope that events around the country continue to be successful. It is important to shed light on success stories about recovering species and the importance of continued protection of those at risk.

The protection of endangered species has become increasingly relevant in our country and around the world in the past century. In the early 1970s, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act to protect plant and animal life from reaching the brinks of extinction. This act has been further developed and amended since its original enactment to protect and preserve more species and the habitats they depend on.

To date, the Endangered Species Act has shown great progress and results. Almost 50 species have been recovered and delisted, while 23 other species have been reclassified from endangered to threatened. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Endangered Species Act has saved more than 99 percent of its listed species from extinction.

Endangered Species Day was created in 2006 to recognize the national conservation effort to protect our nation's endangered species and their habitats. Local zoos, schools, libraries, museums, and community organizations around the country have taken the opportunity to host educational activities and events to generate awareness about the importance of protecting endangered species worldwide.

In spite of these successes, we are still losing species at alarming rates. Worldwide, more than 16,000 species are threatened with extinction. Up to one-third of U.S. species are at increased risk of extinction, and more than 1,300 U.S. plants and animals have already been federally listed as threatened or endangered, and protected under the Endangered Species Act.

As a Floridian, I am particularly concerned about endangered species in the Everglades. Florida has the third highest number of endangered species in the nation. Of the 108 species listed under the Endangered Species Act throughout Florida, 65 of them are located in the Everglades. If we do not act fast, we may lose some of our most incredible species, such as the Florida panther, the woodrat and the manatee.

Madam Speaker, it is crucial to protect the diversity of our planet's species and educate ourselves about the issues and challenges affecting these species and their habitats. Wildlife conservation must continue to be one of our top priorities. I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating Endangered Species Day and continuing to promote wildlife conservation.