

staff. And following a period where she lived in Missouri, she returned to DC to work on the staff of the Committee on Science and Technology.

I have long been proud of the bipartisan nature of this Committee. Leigh Ann exemplifies this even in her home as she is happily married to John Cuaderes, the Republican Deputy Staff Director for the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Outside of work, Leigh Ann is a dog-lover, a DC restaurant connoisseur, and she enjoys traveling.

Leigh Ann is known among staff as the person who gets things done. Throughout her career, staff have consistently relied on her sound judgment and thoughtful consideration on a countless number of projects. Beginning in 2007, the offices of the Committee on Science and Technology were renovated as the first House office space in the "Green the Capitol Initiative." Leigh Ann managed and oversaw this vast project. She also coordinated the transition of our committee to the Majority in 2006.

Leigh Ann has long been a dedicated, loyal, and hard working member of my staff I want to thank her from the bottom of my heart for everything from volunteering as a teenager on my first campaign to her expertise in managing the office for the Committee on Science and Technology.

Leigh Ann, I cannot imagine my time in Congress without your steadfast service. I know that all the staff of the Committee on Science and Technology wish you well in the next phase of your life. We will miss you and cannot replace you.

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#### INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS HOUSING FAIRNESS ACT OF 2010

### HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Ms. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today I introduce a bill to ensure that veterans have access to a diverse range of housing options.

In 2006, Congress passed legislation allowing veterans to use their VA loans to purchase cooperative housing. The VA loan program allows veterans to buy homes with no down payment and limited closing costs; additionally, the program offers negotiable interest rates and flexible repayment plans. With over one million housing cooperatives nationwide, extending these generous loan benefits can make affordable homeownership a reality for veterans in our districts all across the country.

This bill makes permanent the Department of Veterans Affairs loan guarantee for the purchase of residential cooperative housing units and gives veterans the freedom to choose where they live by allowing veterans to use their veterans' loans to purchase co-ops. In my district, co-ops are often the lowest cost housing. It makes no sense to deny veterans the ability to use their veterans' benefits to purchase these units. My bill will allow veterans to explore all housing options and choose the one that suits their needs.

With this legislation we can honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans by giving them the tools and resources they need to pursue their dreams.

#### EQUITY IN SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 2010 INTRODUCTION STATEMENT

### HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Equity in Social Security Act of 2010." This bill is designed to eliminate the discriminatory policy of the Social Security Administration that prevents same-sex couples from receiving the same benefits as their heterosexual counterparts.

Social Security provides spousal, survivor, and death benefits to married heterosexual couples in their later years. Same sex couples are not eligible to receive these benefits because the federal government does not recognize their marriages or civil unions.

These same-sex couples pay into Social Security while working just the same as every other American, but in their time of need, the government treats them differently. Gay couples receive 18 percent less in Social Security benefits than heterosexual couples while lesbian couples receive 31 percent less than heterosexuals. It is no wonder that these groups are also more likely to live in poverty in their old age than heterosexuals.

All Americans should receive a Social Security benefit based on their contribution to the program, not their sexual orientation. That is why my legislation would allow couples in relationships that have been recognized by their state of residence, whether a domestic partnership, civil union or marriage itself, to receive the same benefits from Social Security as heterosexual married couples.

Let me be clear about this effort today. This is meant in no way to distract from the effort to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act. That is the ultimate goal in the movement for marriage equality. My bill is not about marriage—it is about economic fairness. This legislation is meant to provide assistance to elderly individuals who have not been treated fairly by their government.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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#### DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL REPEAL ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

### HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 15, 2010*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2965 and do so proudly. I support the Senate Amendment because I stand on the side of our military and all who have sacrificed for our freedom, and that is why I support the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," DADT, policy which, since 1993 has resulted in the discharge of over 13,000 American servicemen and women and cost our taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars in wasted funds. DADT denies equality to thousands of our soldiers

and dissuades thousands more from enlisting in the defense of our country.

I believe that all Americans willing to risk their lives in the defense of our country and obey its laws should be allowed to do so. Both our military and civilian leaders support the repeal of DADT. It is our responsibility to ensure that this change is initiated at a gradual, manageable pace so as to avoid any unnecessary disruption.

Defense Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, understand that an orderly transition is critical to minimizing disruption in the ranks, ensuring we maintain our strength level and not compromise national security. I applaud Secretary Gates' leadership and initiative, beginning with the landmark report he commissioned in March 2010 which included a survey of over 115,000 enlisted personnel and 44,000 military family members. In conjunction with this report, the Department of Defense prepared an implementation plan that will provide a smooth transition with minimal dislocation. The Pentagon stands ready to implement this plan, and I am proud that Congress is acting to move it forward.

In the 17 years since DADT was adopted, there has been a remarkable change in public opinion regarding the acceptance of gays and lesbians serving in the armed forces. This change has been so dramatic that the repeal of DADT no longer represents a subject of controversy for the large majority of Americans. Indeed, repealing DADT brings public policy in line with informed popular sentiment, which is nearly always a positive good.

The Pentagon's report documents one of the largest surveys of the attitudes of military personnel ever conducted. Its key finding is that the sexual orientation of their peers is not a matter of concern to most service members. Nearly 7 in 10, 69 percent, of respondents believed that they had already served with a gay or lesbian in their unit, and it did not undermine morale or military readiness. The report also finds that, if properly implemented, the repeal of DADT will have no adverse affect on unit cohesion or morale. These attitudes are in line with those of most Americans, who recognize that the military needs every patriotic, able-bodied recruit during a time of war.

Mr. Speaker, opponents of the measure still claim that repealing DADT is "social engineering" that will undermine morale and erode the fighting force of our nation's military. Their claim is refuted by the empirical study conducted by the Pentagon. It is also interesting to note that similar arguments were raised in opposition to racial integration and the enlistment of women in the armed services. The critics were wrong then and they are wrong now. The action we take today also brings us in line with the long-standing practice of our NATO allies as well as that of Israel, a nation rooted in faith that would do nothing to compromise the security of its people.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this legislation and urge all my colleagues to do likewise. I look forward to the moment when President Obama signs this bill into law, which will at once strengthen our armed forces and ensure that all those who want to defend our freedom are given the opportunity.