EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TO RECOGNIZE MARY SHAFER

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, it has been said that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and sincerely. It must be done with complete dedication to the people and to the community in which one serves. Mr. Speaker, that is how Mary Shafer's colleagues would describe her. Mary recently retired from Nockamixon Township Volunteer Emergency Services Management. She served Nockamixon as the public information officer and weather coordinator. Over the past several years, the Bucks County portion of my district has been hit hard by devastating storms including Superstorm Sandy, leaving behind fallen trees and downed power lines. Nockamixon and the surrounding area lost electricity and access to running water for days and in some cases weeks. The local middle school was converted into a shelter to host Nockamixon residents. Mary's role as public information officer was critical to health, safety, and welfare of these constituents.

Mary demonstrated day after day that by working together, we have the fortitude to meet the needs facing our community even during the most challenging times. I would like to commend Mary Shafer for her dedication to public service and offer our gratitude on behalf of the constituents of the Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District.

COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDMARK DECISION IN BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which overturned the doctrine of "separate but equal" that had been the law of the land since 1896 when the Supreme Court decided Plessy v. Ferguson.

In Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court declared that separate public schools for black and white Americans were unconstitutional. This unanimous decision sparked the movement toward desegregation of American institutions and paved the way for the civil rights movement.

On the anniversary of this landmark decision, it is appropriate that we pay tribute to our ancestors who endured and lived through those days of crisis and challenge so that we could enjoy the right to vote, the right to equal protection of the law, and to enjoy the blessings of liberties. These efforts should not go unnoticed.

This historic case originated in Topeka, Kansas, and involved a black third-grader named Linda Brown, who had to walk one mile through a railroad switchyard to get to her black elementary school, even though a white elementary school was only seven blocks away.

Linda's father, Oliver Brown, tried to enroll her in the white elementary school, but the principal of the school refused. Brown went to McKinley Burnett, the head of Topeka's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and asked for help. The NAACP got other black parents to join in to a complaint and in 1951 the NAACP requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas heard Brown's case and refused to overrule the precedent of Plessy v. Ferguson which allowed separate but equal school systems for blacks and whites.

The case was taken to the Supreme Court on October 1, 1951 and set up one of the landmark cases in the history of the American justice system. It was the arguments of the NAACP in representing Brown that won the day.

On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren read the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court:

> We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other ''tangible'' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does. . . . We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

With those few words more than a century of racial discrimination and separation were dealt a great blow.

It is up to us to preserve the hard won gains of those who led the fight and won the case of Brown v. Board of Education.

A TRIBUTE TO CAROL WINOGRAD, M.D. FOR BEING AWARDED THE 2014 TZEDEK V'SHALOM AWARD, JUNE 8, 2014

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary woman, Dr. Carol Winograd, who is being honored with the 2014 Tzedek v'Shalom Award on June 8, 2014, at J Street's Annual Gala Dinner. Elected officials, community leaders, local activists and students will join together in an unprecedented show of support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

J Street, the political home for pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans, is honoring Dr. Carol Winograd for her lifelong dedication to tikkun olam ("repairing the world") and for her steadfast leadership and commitment to J Street's mission.

Carol Hutner Winograd, M.D., is an emerita professor of Medicine and Human Biology at Stanford University. She gives generously of her time and considerable talents in leadership roles to many organizations, including the National Board of Abraham's Vision; the San Francisco Regional Board of the New Israel Fund; and the American Board of Internal Medicine. She is a member of the steering committee of the Women Donors Network's Middle East Peace Circle, and the founder and former chair of the Advisory Board of the Jewish Chaplaincy at Stanford University Medical Center. In 2012, Dr. Winograd co-led J Street's first Women's Congressional Delegation to Israel, and in 2013, she co-founded J Street's Women's Leadership Forum to increase the participation of women leading the organization and to support the greater inclusion of Israeli and Palestinian women in peace negotiations.

Dr. Winograd has been married for more than 43 years to Dr. Terry Winograd. They have two daughters, Avra, who is engaged to Justin Durak, and Shoshana, a Conservative rabbi who is married to Rabbi Philip Ohriner. Shoshana and Philip have two sons, Ari and Eli, who are a great source of pride and joy to their grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring the 2014 Tzedek v'Shalom awardee, Dr. Carol Winograd, an extraordinary woman who is devoted to her community, her country, to Israel and to peace and justice. How proud and privileged I am to represent her and call her my trusted friend.

CONGRATULATING DR. GORDON A. MERRITT, D.D.S., P.A. ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 85TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Gordon A. Merritt on the occasion of his 85th birthday. I am proud to celebrate Dr. Merritt not only for his longevity, but more rightly for the amazing scope of his contributions to the Fort Lauderdale community and our country as a whole.

Dr. Merritt has dedicated his life to the care of his fellow citizens and has served them in numerous capacities. He earned his Doctorate of Dental Surgery in 1957 from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee and immediately entered the Air Force where he practiced for four years before returning home to Florida.

Dr. Merritt and his family moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1963, and he has been a pillar in

the community ever since. He opened his clinic in a predominately African American neighborhood, and was one of the first African American medical professionals to provide services to this underserved community.

In addition to his work in the medical field, Dr. Merritt has been a tireless advocate for his community. He is a past Exalted Ruler of the Pride of Fort Lauderdale Elks Lodge #652, as well as a Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Dr. Merritt has also been a member of the Mount Hernon A.M.E. Church since 1964, where he has served as a Trustee.

None of these great achievements would have been possible without the love and support of Dr. Merritt's wife Rose Legon, who together raised two wonderful children, Dr. Pamela Merritt and Portia Mehaffey. They are also the proud grandparents of four lovely grandchildren, Courtney, Cierra, Darby, and Addison.

Mr. Speaker, to arrive at the great milestone of 85 years is no small thing. I am truly honored to share in this celebration of Dr. Merritt's many accomplishments and contributions. I wish him many more years of happiness and success.

RECOGNIZING THE WEST FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL'S LADY JAGUARS AS CLASS 4A STATE SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to congratulate the First Congressional District of Florida's West Florida High School's girls softball team for winning the Class 4A State Championship. This victory marks the Lady Jaguars first ever state championship. West Florida High School ended their championship season with a record of 29–1, with a victory over P.K. Yonge High School on May 8, 2014 in the Class 4A State Championship Game.

Led by head coach Jessica Smith, pitching coach Angie Johnson, and assistant coach Gary Jackson, the Jaguars are a team of young women with tremendous persistence and passion. These attributes were on full display in the championship game when the Jaguars found themselves trailing by four runs and down to their last out in the 7th inning. Despite the long odds, the Jaguars refused to give up. A pivotal moment in the game occurred when the Navy's Blue Angels, home based at Pensacola Naval Air Station, could be seen flying over the field, which was located over 500 miles from Pensacola, in Vero Beach. As Coach Smith described, catching a glimpse of home both encouraged and sparked a special energy in the Jaguars, and they triumphed over P.K. Yonge with a score of 6 to 5.

Winning the state championship is a true testament to the hard work, ambition, and dedication of the West Florida High School girls softball team. Each team member is an invaluable asset to both the Lady Jaguars and the local community. To be honored with the opportunity to bring home a state championship is a wonderful reflection of the team's commitment to Northwest Florida and to each other. I commend Korina Rosario, Kathleen Smiley, Jordaine Watkins, Nachelle Watson, Ali Cutaio, Kristin Gunter, Emily Loring, Kayla Miller, Breana Rogers, Danyelle Black, Maegan Freeman, Jibrasha Moore, Farrah Nicholas, Lauren Carnley, Jasmyn Nguyen, and Ealon Pyle for challenging themselves as a team and setting a shining example of camaraderie and athleticism for their fellow students and youth in Pensacola.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it gives me great pleasure to recognize this outstanding group of young women and their devoted coaches for their extraordinary victory. My wife Vicki joins me in offering our best wishes to West Florida High School and its talented athletes for their continued personal and athletic success.

HONORING DR. AFAF I. MELEIS

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Dr. Afaf I. Meleis, outgoing Dean of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing. Dr. Meleis has served as Dean for 12 years, and will be truly missed by her students and colleagues.

Dr. Meleis assumed her role as Dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of nursing in 2002, and under her leadership, Penn Nursing is now regarded as one of the world's most regarded schools of nursing. Thanks to Dr. Meleis, Penn Nursing is now internationally renowned for their innovative research, teaching and practice and the School has established departments of Behavioral Health Sciences and Family and Community Health.

Dr. Meleis is internationally recognized for her work in nursing theory and her devotion to the health of women and girls. Dr. Meleis has intensified efforts to improve the health of women around the world by creating academic partnerships, and developing relationships with the United Nations and other international organizations dedicated to equity and well-being.

The first time I met her, my daughter Chloe and I had joined her for a CARE learning tour in West Africa, I was so overwhelmed by her compassion and dedication. Her expertise and brilliance are quickly made known to those around her, but it is her endless humanitarian work and advocacy for children which is most admirable. Her work as the Dean of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing, has elevated the program to what it is today: one of the leading nursing graduate schools in the world.

Although I have only known Dr. Meleis for a short time, she has made a tremendous impact in Chloe's and my life. I want to congratulate her on her long and successful tenure she has served as Dean. She has gone above her duty to ensure that the University of Pennsylvania, School of Nursing, is regarded as a top tier nursing program, and I wish her the best of luck in all of her future endeavors.

SHANNON MELENDI'S DEATH STILL STINGS, 20 YEARS LATER

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on previous occasions I have spoken about the loss of Shannon Melendi, a beautiful girl who attended my alma mater, Southwest Miami High School, and whose life was taken tragically as a teenager in 1994. As their Congresswoman and friend, I thank the Melendi Family for keeping us vigilant. I would like to share an eloquently written story about Shannon by Anne (Martinez) Vasquez, Associate Editor at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, which was published by the newspaper on March 25, 2014:

SHANNON MELENDI'S DEATH STILL STINGS, 20 YEARS LATER

What I would give to relive those days of playing with our collection of cheap drugstore makeup sprawled on the bedroom floor as we plotted our outfits and gossiped about boys. Shannon Melendi and I became fast friends at the cusp of adolescence, when you dream of days still decades away and fantasize about chapters in your life you've yet to write.

Tears still sting my eyes when I think of the final chapter of Shannon's short life: At 19, a sophomore at Emory University, she disappeared on a Saturday afternoon after going on a lunch break from her part-time job as a scorekeeper at a softball field in suburban Atlanta.

The year was 1994, 20 years ago this week. It would be another painful 12 years before the man long suspected of kidnapping Shannon confessed.

Shannon's body was never found. There was no funeral, no official moment to mourn. Instead, the last 20 years have unfolded in surreal fashion, where life goes on for Shannon's closest family and friends even as we've struggled to fill in the blanks, a search for answers that never come.

Only now, as I reflect on the twists and turns of my life, do I realize the imprint that Shannon's story has left on my soul, a silent narrative that has molded my evolution as an adult and, ultimately, as a mother. The underlying lesson lingering in my subconsciousness: If evil can strike on a Saturday afternoon—snatching a smart 19-year-old with quick wit, the president of her high school senior class, an aspiring lawyer, a champion debater, the daughter of present and caring parents—it can happen to anyone, anywhere.

EVIL STRIKES

I woke up on Tuesday morning, March 29, 1994, with my father handing me a small clipping buried inside the Local section of The Miami Herald. I found the concerned look on my father's face puzzling, until I read the brief article, just a few lines long, saying Shannon's parents had flown to Atlanta after learning she had gone missing.

The rest of the week was a blur until I went to see Shannon's younger sister, Monique, who was staying with her aunt and grandparents. She turned 14 years old five days after Shannon disappeared, and I wanted to bring her a present. I sought to revisit happier times, when the Melendi family would invite me to join them on their vacations to the Florida Keys. Endless summer days where I first learned to water ski, jump waves and conquer my fear of treading open water.

In the weeks and months—even years—that followed, Shannon regularly paid me visits in my dreams. In many, I would replay our last chance encounter, which took place just a couple of weeks before Shannon disappeared.

A complete fluke, I had spotted Shannon among a sea of Spring Breakers in Daytona Beach, a rare place for either of us to visit. I walked in her direction until she came into clear focus. Yes, it was Shannon. For a few fleeting minutes, we laughed and reminisced. We caught up on where our college lives were taking us. We made plans to see each other a few weeks later when she would be back in Miami visiting her family. Then we hugged and went our separate ways.

It was the last time I saw Shannon. I didn't know it at the time, but it was my chance to say goodbye. She would be gone before the month came to a close.

FIGHTING THE MONSTER

As the years went by without word of what became of Shannon, my dreams began to reflect the anger I bottled deep inside.

In one recurring dream, it's late in the evening in some unnamed town in the middle of America. I walk into a restaurant for a bite. The room is dark and bustling with customers. I take a seat in a booth and see Shannon sitting across from her captor. Her hands are not tied, but she's not moving, not trying to escape. She's scared or drugged or both, I reason. I approach their table, see a spark of hope in Shannon's eyes and quickly find others who help me hold down the man who had stolen Shannon from her family. We pummel him. Shannon returns home.

My anger also manifested itself in other ways.

I made decisions determined not to cede power to the monster. I fought the fear that evil could lurk behind any corner.

I jumped at the chance to intern at The Boston Globe rather than spend the summer at a local paper. I walked to and from my apartment many late evenings holding a stun gun wrapped in a newspaper. Years later, as a reporter for The Miami Herald, I'd live and work in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for several months, riding the subway and making my way in another language in an unknown city five times the size of New York City.

I moved across the country to Northern California, where I worked and lived for seven years. A visit to Yosemite, on assignment in Mexico or vacationing in Vancouver, I'd imagine crossing paths with Shannon and putting an end to the tragic mystery.

ANGER TURNS INTO FEAR

Then I became a mother and the anger gave way to fear.

My firstborn was just shy of two years old when Colvin ''Butch'' Hinton III, a man with a history of harming young girls, confessed to kidnapping and murdering Shannon. Hinton, an umpire at the softball field where Shannon kept score, said he had set out to commit murder on March 26, 1994. He had targeted another woman but changed his plans when he spotted Shannon.

Hinton said he held Shannon at knifepoint, tied her up in his home, repeatedly raped her—in between catching a movie at a local theater in an effort to create an alibi—and ultimately strangled her in the early morning hours of March 27.

The unspeakable details resurfaced my dormant pain.

As my son's independence blossomed—and with that his ability to walk away from me at a department store or at a park—I found myself fighting a constant unease. I wanted—needed—to know where he was at every moment.

Most parents take their children to the park to relax, sit back and let their kids play. That will never be me.

I'll never forget spending one afternoon at a local water park with several of my son's friends. The other mothers positioned their chairs in the shallow water to chat and sunbathe. They didn't fuss, completely confident that their kids were safe. I stood the entire time, sloshing through the kneehigh water to make sure my son emerged from the labyrinth of slides.

Dealing with my vigilant watch is a reality my children have learned to accept: My 9-year-old son understands why last summer I had him skip a field trip to the water park. My 4-year-old daughter recites to me how I shouldn't speak to strangers. I live in constant battle with myself, wrestling with a deep-seated desire to fuel my children's independence while also fighting a fear that harm may come their way.

Both of my children know, to varying degrees, Shannon's story. They know the world can be cruel, but they also exude a spirit of boundless optimism. They see themselves as the superheroes who can change the world.

I hope they do.

TIMELINE: THE SHANNON MELENDI MURDER

March 26, 1994: Shannon Melendi, a South Florida native and 19-year-old Emory University sophomore, vanishes on a Saturday afternoon from her part-time job as a scorekeeper at a softball field in suburban Atlanta.

March 27, 1994: Shannon's parents, Luis and Yvonne Melendi, get word that Shannon has been missing for more than 24 hours. They make arrangements to fly to Atlanta. In the ensuing weeks, volunteers and friends plaster streets with ''MISSING'' posters bearing Shannon's photo. Print and TV media in South Florida and Atlanta follow the story closely.

April 6, 1994: A caller to an Emory University hot line claims he is holding Shannon captive. As proof, the caller leaves a ring belonging to Shannon, enclosed in a bag, inside the pay phone where the call was made.

April 12, 1994: Police search the home of Colvin ''Butch'' Hinton III, an umpire at the softball field the day Shannon was last seen. Hinton has a criminal record of sexual assaults.

September 1994: A fire damages Hinton's home.

October 20, 1994: The Melendi family and friends of Shannon attend a vigil and press conference at Emory University on what would have been Shannon's 20th birthday. Luis and Yvonne Melendi keep Shannon's story alive in the local and national media for years to come.

March 26, 1995: Southwest 48th Street in Miami-Dade County is renamed Shannon Melendi Drive. The street runs in front of Southwest Miami Senior High School, where Shannon was class president and a prominent student.

June 1995: A federal grand jury indicts Hinton for arson, suggesting Hinton set fire to his home to collect insurance money.

January 1996: Hinton is convicted of arson and sent to federal prison.

December 2003: Hinton is released from federal prison.

August 2004: Authorities arrest Hinton, using a grand jury indictment that accuses Hinton of murdering Shannon Melendi.

September 2005: A jury convicts Hinton of murder. He is sentenced to life in prison.

June 2006: The Georgia Supreme Court upholds Hinton's conviction.

July 17, 2006: Hinton confesses to kidnapping, raping and murdering Shannon, after his appeal was denied.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this a National Small Business Week and I rise to recognize the contributions of small businesses in my congressional district and across the country.

With more than half of Americans either owning or working for a small business, it is clear these companies are a vital part of our nation's fabric.

Every day, small firms and their employees across every sector and industry are working to grow and become stronger.

When they do, we all benefit from their innovations, their job-creating power, and their ability to make the U.S. more competitive globally.

That why I support the Democratic agenda to help small businesses and entrepreneurs startup, grow, and create jobs.

''This includes supporting tax credits to help small businesses hire new employees; immigration reform, which will provided a solution for those businesses facing a maze of problems when hiring immigrant workers: and expanding financing options for entrepreneurs, especially in low- and moderate-income communities.

We must also oppose cuts to job training programs that help meet American businesses' workforce needs. Lastly, we must include working on a long-term extension of the Highway Trust Fund, which is critical for small construction firms across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses and entrepreneurs impact our lives ever day and it is fitting that we recognize their contributions to the economy and our country during National Small Business Week.

Whether it is opening a new storefront, training workers, or sponsoring activities in our cities and towns, we have many reasons to thank small businesses.

This week we do so, and recognize these entrepreneurs not only for the contributions that they have already made, but also for their future work to strengthen our local communities.

In recognition of all that small businesses do for our communities, from providing conveniently located goods and services to sponsoring local events and organizations, I urge all Americans to take this opportunity to patronize the diverse businesses in their communities to demonstrate to them our continued appreciation and support.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 18TH ANNUAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 18th Annual Affordable Housing Week in Alameda County. Organized by East Bay Housing Organizations, a group of community leaders and affordable housing advocates, this period lasts

from May 9 to May 18 and includes over 23 events are being held in ten cities across the East Bay, including in my district, to call attention to the need for affordable housing.

The health and economic stability of our communities depend on the availability of quality and affordable homes. Many non-profit and community organizations are continuing to address this need by providing homes and shelter for those in need. I believe strongly in the importance of these organizations, which provide affordable housing to our most vulnerable populations, including seniors, veterans, low-income families, the homeless, and those with disabilities. We must ensure that these organizations have resources and support in order to meet these critical needs.

Last November, I was proud to join with Habitat for Humanity to restore a house in Livermore for a local veteran buying a home for the first time. Habitat for Humanity East Bay/Silicon Valley prioritizes providing affordable housing opportunities for our veterans.

I also want to recognize Eden Housing as an inspiring example of affordable housing. Their new development, Emerald Vista in Dublin, has won a Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award, given by the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition. This award recognizes outstanding Low-Income Housing Tax Credit developments and honors the best in affordable rental housing.

Housing for those in need is a community-wide effort, and I am proud to represent a district with so many leaders working to assist individuals in need of supportive and affordable housing. These efforts bring us closer to creating kind of sustainable communities that are essential to the diversity and prosperity of California.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO FACILITATE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AT AND POTENTIAL USES OF POINT SPENCER IN THE BERING STRAIT REGION OF ALASKA

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to facilitate infrastructure development at, and potential uses of, Point Spencer in the Bering Strait Region of Arctic Alaska by and for both the public and private sectors through fostering a public/private partnership among the Federal Government/the U.S. Coast Guard, the State of Alaska, the Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC) and industry.

I will be joined in co-sponsoring this bill by my friend, the Chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Honorable Duncan Hunter.

What the Bill Provides: This legislation seeks to address the legitimate interests of the Federal and State Governments as well as the private sector in providing a means for future uses of Point Spencer by Federal, state, and private sector stakeholders for a variety of tasks and missions, including search and rescue, shipping safety, economic development, oil spill prevention and response, port of refuge, arctic research, maritime law enforcement and related and other uses.

For the Coast Guard: The bill provides a footprint at Point Spencer that the Coast Guard has indicated that it needs to retain to support possible future uses of a portion of Point Spencer, a total of approximately 140 acres. That includes a major footprint on the water and the land on which buildings that the Coast Guard boarded up in 2010 are located, as well as rights to use at no cost the current and any future airstrips for Federal purposes. The bill provides that the Secretary of the agency in which the Coast Guard is operating could, instead of retaining the lands reserved for the Coast Guard, have those lands conveyed to BSNC and then leased at no cost to the Coast Guard by BSNC. Also, a federal Navigational Servitude is reserved for the Coast Guard to exercise upon tidelands and submerged lands.

For the State of Alaska: The bill provides for the conveyance of approximately 180 acres to the State, including the airstrip and a shoreline footprint on the water as well as a right-of-way should it decide to build a road in the future from the airstrip to the mainland across Coast Guard and/or BSNC land. The State would also have a choice of having the lands identified in the bill to be conveyed to the state, conveyed to BSNC instead and then leased back to the state at no cost to the state. The tidelands and submerged lands around Point Spencer would be recognized as having continued ownership by the State of Alaska as they were presumptively conveyed to the State under the Statehood Act.

For Bering Straits Native Corporation: The bill provides for BSNC to receive the remainder of the lands not set aside for the Coast Guard or the State and thereby to be able to serve in facilitating the future uses of Point Spencer. If the Coast Guard and the state prefer to have access to the lands through a lease arrangement rather than having them retained or conveyed as applicable, BSNC would receive the lands identified for Coast Guard or State use and then lease those lands back at no cost to the Coast Guard or the State. BSNC would have access to the airstrip but could be charged usual and customary landing fees to help defray maintenance and administrative costs associated with the operations of the airstrip. Provision is made in the bill to help ensure protections for archaeological and ancestral items of antiquity through the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Background: By way of background, Point Spencer is a small 2,600 plus-acre spit of land located in the Bering Strait region and was used for thousands of years by the Inupiat Eskimos and their ancestors and was the site of an ancient Inupiat village. Long before the coming of Europeans and Americans to this region, Point Spencer served as a major trading hub for the intercontinental movement of items among the indigenous groups of what is today, Alaska, and eastern Eurasia. With the ''discovery'' of whales north of Bering Strait in the 1840's by non-Natives, Point Spencer and adjacent Port Clarence, served as a safe harbor for the vessels of the American Whaling industry. In 1850–1852, vessels searching for the lost Franklin expedition over-wintered in Port Clarence. From 1865–1867 the area saw activity related to the Western Union Telegraph project, an uncompleted plan to link North America with Russia across Bering Strait. Point Spencer-Port Clarence continued to serve as a major harbor for the Revenue Cutter Service (forerunner of the USCG) during the 19th and into the 20th centuries. Throughout this period of initial contact, the residents of Bering Strait provided food, safe harbor, and guiding services to the visiting EuroAmerican ventures.

Because of the use of this spit of land by indigenous Peoples, the ancestors of those who now comprise the BSNC, for thousands of years before contact by non-Natives, the land is of great importance archaeologically and culturally to Alaska Natives living in the region.

After passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, the purpose of which was to help settle aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives and also help clear the way so that the Trans-Alaska pipeline right-of-way could be secured and the pipeline constructed in the 1970s, BSNC filed a selection to Point Spencer in 1976 as a 14(h)(8) selection under ANCSA. Key among the reasons for this selection by BSNC was the recognition of the historically strategic place of Point Spencer within Bering Strait history, and to help ensure that the artifacts and archaeological resources from their ancestors would be better protected and the land would be available for future purposes.

However, because Point Spencer had been withdrawn in 1962 from appropriation under the mining and mineral leasing and other relevant laws of the U.S. so as to permit the construction of a Coast Guard LORAN (Port Clarence long-range radar site) station in 1966 at Point Spencer, the lands were unavailable for BSNC to select or to use unless and until the U.S. no longer needed the lands for the LORAN site. Two years after BSNC filed its selection at Point Spencer, the State of Alaska in 1978 filed a selection application under the Statehood Act on most of the land there and then top-filed on the entire parcel in 1993.

In 2010, the LORAN site at Point Spencer (named the Port Clarence LORAN station) was closed, hardened and abandoned by the Coast Guard and LORAN was thereafter no longer utilized for navigation purposes. At that time, BSNC began to explore the potential for fulfilling its aspirations for selecting Point Spencer that began 34 (thirty-four) years earlier.

BSNC contracted in 2010 to have a geomorphic study of Point Spencer undertaken to determine the long-term stability of the landform. BSNC also conducted an economic study of the lands and began an analysis of the hazardous materials contamination that the Coast Guard generated during its years of operating the LORAN facility and cataloguing any necessary clean-up that would be required to make some of the abandoned site useable. Working with the shipping and response industry, BSNC has also begun developing a phased infrastructure development plan for the Point Spencer lands. Such infrastructure could play a key role in fulfilling the purposes outlined above as well as in enabling the U.S. to pursue and protect national security, transportation, and potential economic interests in the region as the sea lanes open up and natural resource development is considered in the Arctic.

Potential for Job Creation: The bill seeks to provide for public sector interests and at the

same time ensure that the priceless archaeological and cultural artifacts of the ancestors of the people of the Bering Straits region are protected, many of which artifacts have, unfortunately, been allowed to be taken and sold abroad during the years of use for the LORAN site and post abandonment. This would provide job opportunities for its people in a region where villages can face poverty rates of over 40% and where unemployment in some communities reaches nearly 50%. If wise use is made of this area, the essential needs of each stakeholder can likely be addressed.

Economic opportunity in this region of rural Alaska is an imperative to be achieved. Suicide rates among young rural Alaska Natives are extremely alarming and the Bering Straits region experiences that tragedy time and again. Much of the underlying cause of such tragic incidents comes from young people not having work and vocational training opportunities in an area their ancestors have inhabited for generation after generation. While development at Point Spencer would not be a panacea to all social maladies and challenges of the people of the region, it would be a remarkable and enlightened advancement for the people of the region and at the same time serve the federal and state interests and those of the private sector. And, in my mind, it is indefensible for those of us in leadership positions not to attempt to help address this scourge of suicide through sensible approaches to prudent use of lands such as is provided in this legislation.

National Security Interests Will Be Fully Supported: Whatever national security interests that may be involved ultimately with respect to Point Spencer and its future potential uses can be fully and responsibly dealt with through the approach set forth in this legislation. Since its establishment pursuant to authorization by Congress under ANCSA and incorporated under state law, BSNC has carried out numerous contracts with the federal government that were/are directly tied to the national security interests of the U.S., and this Native Corporation has met the challenge fully and performed well. BSNC has the capacity and capability to support the advancement of U.S. national security, transportation, and economic development interests at Point Spencer. Relevant to this discussion, a recent report to Congress entitled ''Feasibility of Establishing an Arctic Deep-draft Seaport'', dated February 11, 2014, states: ''The Coast Guard is currently engaged in negotiation to turn over most of this large parcel [Point Spencer] of property to the Bering Straits Native Corporation . . . Another goal is to pursue innovative arrangements to support the investments needed in the Arctic region, including 'new thinking on public-private . . . partnerships.' ''

The following is a list of a few of the types of federal and private sector contracts that Alaska Native Corporations, including BSNC, have been involved in over recent decades, including many with the Department of Defense and the various Armed Services of our nation including work on military bases and posts throughout the nation: Aircraft maintenance and support; aircraft refueling; aerospace engineering; Tactical gear manufacturing; survival training; winter warfare training; Intelligence analysis; BRAC management; Software design, implementation, and testing; Ship building, Ship repair, IT for various branches of the military service; Constructing landing strips; Base Operations Support, Aviation Services; Research and Development; Engineering, Medical Staffing, Telecommunications, Cyber security; Security; Environmental remediation, Port and Harbor Operations; Healthcare Services; and Construction of a marine fiber optic subsea cable system to the nation's largest Coast Guard base to a Missile launch facility, to a major Alaska city and by microwave transmissions, to Alaska Native villages bringing high-speed, reliable, all-weather broadband to places that heretofore did not have access to such technology.

It is in part through such contract work that Alaska Natives have made incremental but significant progress in realizing the promise envisioned in the enactment by Congress of ANCSA. That work for Alaska Natives (and for other Native Americans in the country) has begun to help extricate their people from the vicious cycle of chronic and pernicious poverty, unemployment and lack of job opportunities for their youths, particularly in remote rural areas, and thereby help address some of the social ills that are associated with such conditions.

Conclusion: With the introduction of this legislation, and as it moves forward, the interests of all stakeholders interested in seeing that productive use is made of Point Spencer for diverse legitimate uses in the Arctic region can be fully met.

This approach is an equitable and sensible way to address the interests of the public and private sectors in Point Spencer. I believe that passage of the bill is in the best interests of our nation, the State of Alaska, the indigenous people of the Bering Strait region, as well as the private sector.