

THANK YOU TO STAFF AND JO-MARIE ST. MARTIN

(Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, this has been a busy month for all of us. We have passed more major legislation in a few weeks than we have in a few years. And now I want to thank all of the people who made it possible. I am talking about all the committee staff and all the people behind the scenes here in the Capitol who make this work. Thank you very, very much.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, this includes, of course, our legislative counsel. I don't think you could find a group of people more dedicated to their jobs. These people work late nights every night. They work weekends. They are always on call.

So I want to put into the RECORD a statement thanking every one of them by name. They were a part of history, and history should know their names.

I also want to thank one person in particular, and that is Jo-Marie St. Martin. Today is Jo-Marie's last day on the Hill. She has been working for this House for over 20 years, most recently as general counsel and chief of legislative operations for the Speaker. I could not even begin to list everything that she has accomplished.

We all know her so well. She is a legend in her own right. But as her colleagues will tell you, what is even more impressive than her career is her character. She is simply unflappable. When everyone else is on edge, she is calm. When they are flustered—and, believe it or not, some people get flustered around here from time to time—she is steady.

And though other people might like to show off their brains and their know-how, she is the definition of kindness, of humility. I have never heard her dismiss a question, no matter how small. She is always eager to help people understand. And her enthusiasm is nothing short of infectious. You can see it when she walks into a room. She has an effect on people. Everyone feels more at ease. The word that comes to mind is Zen—except, of course, when she is at a Caps game.

She knows the law backwards and forwards because she loves the law. She cares about the law. She cares about this House. For over 20 years, she has done her part to uphold its rights, to make sure that every voice was heard. Everyone here owes her a debt of gratitude.

If I could use an old-fashioned word, I would say she is a true patriot. We salute her.

So please join me one last time in thanking our friend Jo-Marie St. Martin.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of those who have been flustered by Jo-Marie.

Jo-Marie, as all of you know, has been with this institution for over two decades. She started as an intern in the Committee on Rules, unfortunately, because she got to know the rules very, very well.

And as majority leader for 4 years, as Jo-Marie ran the opposition—the constructive opposition, I will say, the friendly opposition but, nevertheless, the opposition—her intellect, her judgment, her tenacity, her focus was always a challenge. But it has always been good for this institution, because she made sure that the minority was heard. Unfortunately, for us, she has also made sure that the majority was loudly heard when the Republicans were in the majority.

Jo-Marie, as some of you know, is a mathematician by training. She is also a lawyer. She is also a scholar. She is also somebody who cares deeply about this institution.

Jo-Marie is my friend. Now, that does not mean that Jo-Marie and I always had an even-keeled relationship. Sometimes, as I said, she flustered me and us by her skill and by her devotion and loyalty to the Republican Party. But more than that, as the Speaker has said, she had a loyalty to this institution and to our country.

Jo-Marie, you have been an extraordinary representative not only of your party, but of this House. You have been an extraordinary friend of mine and so many.

I know Alexis Covey-Brandt, my chief of staff, and you have worked together a lot. Sometimes you agreed, and sometimes you didn't. Two brilliant women who cared, however, about this institution and making it work for the people.

We call this the people's House. Jo-Marie, you have been one who has always kept that uppermost in your mind. We, on this side of the aisle, share a great respect and affection for you, and we wish you the very best. As a young woman, you still have a lot of contributions to make, and we know you will make them.

We have mixed emotions about your leaving. To some degree, frankly, we think we are advantaged by your leaving. But as an individual and as someone who is your dear, dear friend, I will lament your not being on the floor and ever present, for your advice and counsel, always honest; sometimes in opposition, but always positive. Thank you for all you have done.

God bless you.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4246. An act to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and mem-

bers of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days.

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a joint resolution and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.J. Res. 76. Joint resolution appointing the day for the convening of the second session of the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress.

H. Con. Res. 102. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2576. An act to modernize the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 284. An act to impose sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 2261. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the way beneficiaries are assigned under the Medicare shared savings program by also basing such assignment on services furnished by Federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics.

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CONGRATULATING PROSSER AND OKANOGAN HIGH SCHOOLS

(Mr. NEWHOUSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to congratulate two high school football teams that continue to establish central Washington as the football powerhouse of Washington State.

On December 5, the 13-1 Prosser Mustangs rolled over the Tumwater Thunderbirds to claim the Washington State 2A high school football championship. Led by a stellar defense, the Mustangs amassed four interceptions for the third time in the playoffs. This is Prosser's fifth State football championship.

Not to be outdone, the also 13-1 Okanogan High School Bulldogs pulled off an amazing nail-biter win, a win you usually only see in the movies. Rallying from a 27-14 third quarter deficit, the Bulldogs pulled off a late fourth-quarter touchdown to defeat the Napavine Tigers 36-34. This was Okanogan's second straight Washington State 2B high school football championship.

Both teams have proudly represented their schools and demonstrated a level of skill, teamwork, and tenacity that will prepare them well for future seasons and for future success in life.