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## *House of Representatives*

### Tribute in Honor of Sarah Meece

HON. HAROLD "HAL" ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 12, 2017*

**Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky.** I rise today to pay tribute to my long-time advisor and expert caseworker, Sarah Meece, upon her much-deserved retirement after dedicating more than 40 years of service by my side. When I reflect upon Sarah's career, I stand in awe of her loyalty, her unwavering patience, and her persistent advocacy and undying compassion for those in need.

As Congressman, I have the privilege of assisting the people of southern and eastern Kentucky as they grapple with federal agencies. At the heart of those cases, has stood Sarah Meece, providing expert advice and staunch support for individuals in our region who need help with social security, disability and retirement claims, among many other issues. In fact, over the last 36 years, Sarah has worked on approximately 150,000 cases, representing an unmatched record of assistance for more than 4,000 individuals each year. Sarah has gained so much notoriety in her field that staff from other Congressional offices and officials from the Administration contact her for guidance in casework. In this line of work, there are very few, if any, medals or certificates to honor those worthy of recognition, like Sarah. Nonetheless, her drive and consistency has never failed. Day-in and day-out, Sarah has answered countless phone calls, set up personal meetings and listened to some of the most heartbreaking stories from families who were denied benefits on multiple occasions, those in desperate need of recouping benefits, and others who lost hope in a mountain of federal paperwork. Sarah's reward has been the simple words of appreciation from the thousands, upon thousands of individuals that she has helped over the years. In my eyes, she deserves so much more.

While I wish Sarah the best in her years of retirement, the absence of her daily presence in the office will be insurmountable. When I was elected Commonwealth's Attorney for Pulaski and Rockcastle Counties in 1969, Sarah Meece was there. When I was the Republican nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky in 1979, Sarah Meece was there. When I was elected to Congress in 1980, Sarah Meece was there. In fact, she's been with me every day since, even volunteering her personal time for campaign work along the way, ensuring we both could continue serving the public for another two years.

During her tenure, Sarah welcomed U.S. Presidents and Vice Presidents to our region, befriended eight Kentucky Governors and their staffs, and assisted hundreds of local leaders across southern and eastern Kentucky as they navigated through federal issues. However, it is the people living in the hills and hollers of Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District that have driven her passion-filled public service. With every call and every personal visit, Sarah offered an encouraging word of hope to our constituents. Very few people can find the silver lining in every cloud, like Sarah does, or bring a smile and a laugh to a broken heart. Her comical candor and illustrative storytelling have been a bright spot in everyone's day.

I'm forever grateful to have such a great friend and loyal advisor over these last four decades. Sarah's life's work has given countless families hope in their darkest hour and comforted them through lengthy and complex federal issues. Simply put, Sarah is irreplaceable, both her institutional knowledge of federal casework and her kind, enduring spirit.

Mr. Speaker, if every Congressional office and federal agency had a Sarah Meece, our Nation would operate much better. She has been the jewel of my Congressional operations and the truest friend to the people of southern and eastern Kentucky. My wife, Cynthia, and I wish Sarah and her husband, Bud, many joyful and restful years of retirement with their children and grandchildren.