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House of Representatives

**HON. CORRINE BROWN
OF FLORIDA**

MERGER OF TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS UNION AND INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the January 1, 2012 merger of the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW).

These two great unions, with railroad roots, are on pace to become one strong voice for hundreds of thousands of middle-class working men and women across our great nation.

It was in 1888 that 19 Machinists meeting in a locomotive pit in Atlanta, Georgia formed what is now the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, commonly known as the "Fighting Machinists".

Today's TCU is one union made of many. At its core is the Union founded in 1899, which became the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. Then in 1919 the name expanded, becoming the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees. To further reflect the diversity of the union's membership, the delegates at the 1987 Convention voted to become the Transportation Communications International Union (TCU).

TCU, joining the ranks of the Machinists, makes its membership and the labor movement that much stronger. Both of these unions are constantly fighting for the dignity, welfare and prosperity of their members. Workers are the foundation of our nation; they drive our economy and our country forward. TCU and the IAM understand the values of hard work, faith, family and community--they are the keys of success. These four pillars are what make TCU and IAM stronger.

This merger not only unites two unions but two dedicated union presidents as well. The determination of these two men to fight for the rights for fair wages and working conditions for everyone has its roots in Tom Buffenbarger, who started out as a journeyman tool and die maker at GE's jet engine plant in Evendale, Ohio. In 1997 he was the youngest IAM President in its history. And Bob Scardelletti, a life-long railroader, started out as a yard clerk in Cleveland with the New York Central Railroad in 1967; in 1971 took on his first union position and by 1991 was elected president and has been re-elected by acclamation four times.

TCU and IAM were fundamental in building the American middle-class, and have a vital role today in preserving the American dream for working families. Their unions were unified by a common purpose: to do the very best they can--every single day--for the members they serve. The TCU/IAM merger now creates a powerful force representing close to a million active and retired Americans. Their combined strength will provide leadership throughout the labor movement; particularly, the transportation industry. TCU/IAM is now one of the largest rail unions in the United States.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring this historic merger for the betterment of the hard-working middle-class men and women of our country.