



DETECTIVES' ENDOWMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

POLICE DEPARTMENT • CITY OF NEW YORK

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Ms. Alessandra Biaggi
New York State Senator
34th District
3190 Riverdale Ave., Suite 2
Bronx, NY 10463

December 7, 2020

Dear Senator Biaggi:

We are shocked and dismayed to learn that you are supporting the decision of Dr. Cheryl Champ of the Pelham School District to ban the wearing of sweatshirts that carry the "Thin Blue Line" flag. As you are well aware, these flags simply show support for the law enforcement profession and have *no other meaning*.

These flag patches appeared on sweatshirts that were created to honor Det. George Caccavale, killed in the line of duty on June 26, 1976. Det. Caccavale's daughter Carla was only 20 days old when her father was killed. She is now a mother with children of her own, and they wished to honor their grandfather with these memorial sweatshirts, which were sold to staff members of the Pelham School District. All proceeds from the sweatshirts are going to the Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc.'s Widows' and Children's Fund, as well as the Retired Police Canine Foundation.

You are the granddaughter of a highly celebrated New York Police Department Lieutenant who was an NYPD Medal of Honor recipient. He was also a great friend and father figure to Det. Caccavale. As a matter of fact, on July 1, 1976, The Hon. Mario Biaggi entered into the United States Congressional Record a speech he wrote regarding the death of Det. Caccavale. In his speech, he said of George Caccavale, "He was like a son to me and a brother to my children."

I find it is appalling that you would now so casually dismiss someone else's right to honor their beloved police ancestor, especially knowing how extremely close your family and the Caccavale family have been through the years.

While your grandfather, Mario Biaggi, was a dear, personal friend of mine, so was the late Nancy Caccavale, Det. George Caccavale's widow. In your own campaign video that can still be found on the Internet, you even refer to Det.

George Caccavale as your “uncle,” and mention you, “lost your uncle to gun violence.”

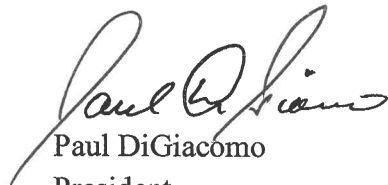
In June of 2018, you and your father Richard, and your uncle Mario, Junior, came to our DEA union picnic where you were campaigning. Now, you have turned your back on the police community. I noticed that you sent out a Tweet calling police in this country “soulless.” You are demonizing the entire law enforcement profession on the altar of “political correctness” and stepping on the backs of all cops just to climb quickly up the political ladder.

During his long and storied police career, Mario Biaggi, Senior was injured many times in the line of duty, but had your grandfather been killed like Ms. Caccavale’s father, needless to say, it is possible that you might not even be here today.

We are shocked that you are not able to transcend your rapacious ambitions and the pandering of the Pelham School District, or Dr. Champ’s irrational decision to treat the police flag as some sort of symbol of “hatred” that evoked “fear” in her student body. This is completely disingenuous and a slanderous affront to the profession your own grandfather loved and honored.

We cannot relate strongly enough how disappointed we are in your sudden anti-police sentiments, and the inflammatory and destructive rhetoric you have chosen to espouse.

Sincerely,



Paul DiGiaco
President

PDG/sfk



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 94th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 122

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, JULY 2, 1976

No. 106

House of Representatives

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO GEORGE CACCAVALE--
A MAN OF PEACE FELLED BY A WORLD OF VIOLENCE

HON. MARIO BIAGGI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1976

Mr. BIAGGI Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, June 29, I endured one of the saddest moments of my life when I attended the funeral of one of my dearest and most beloved friends, George Caccavale. He died on the morning of Saturday June 26 at the age of 33, the victim of a ruthless and senseless murder.

George was a detective with the New York City Transit Police, and extended his law enforcement work into the private sector as a security officer in an effort to make his economic life more fulfilling. While serving in this capacity, George was delivering the daily cash needed by the business he protected early on the morning of Friday, June 25. He was ambushed by two bandits who ruthlessly mowed him down, pumping several gun blasts into his chest and leg, inflicting mortal wounds. He was rushed to a local hospital where valiant efforts were made to save his life. More than 100 pints of blood were donated, mostly by his fellow transit policemen, who came to the cause of their brother as is traditional throughout all police departments. These and other genuine and touching outpourings of human generosity extended to George Caccavale proved to be in vain as he succumbed to his wounds early on Saturday morning, June 26.

George's funeral was assisted by an honor guard comprised of his fellow transit police under the leadership of their able chief, Sanford Garelik, as well as other police contingents. The funeral was attended by police officers from adjoining counties and States, top officials from the New York City administration including John de Roos, senior executive officer of the New York Transit Authority, as well as George's many friends.

As I witnessed this tragic event. I

paused to ponder exactly what it is about our society which breeds and permits such senseless acts of violence to occur. The kind of violence which could snuff out the life of a man while still in his prime. The kind of violence which ended the life of a man who loved and gave of himself to his fellow man during his entire life. The kind of violence which makes a proud wife and happy mother suddenly a grieving widow.

There may be no long and eloquent testimonials paid to the life of George Caccavale. The beauty of this man is best appreciated by those of us who were fortunate enough to have known him. He was a feeling soul, constantly giving of himself for others, always ready with a helping hand. His life was a testimonial to what this Nation and its people are all about. His was a life of commitment to ideals. George valued the very basics of life—love of family, love of friends, love of God, love of country. It can be said tragically that he gave more to life than he had an opportunity to receive.

George had pride in his work. He spent one-third of his young life as a member of the New York City Transit Police, achieving the rank of detective. By anyone's standards George Caccavale was an outstanding and dedicated policeman. As a former law enforcement officer, I have another special feeling about George's death.

It is a feeling of apprehension for all the men and women who represent authority as members of our law enforcement units. They are becoming the visible targets for the depraved elements in our society who can only speak the cowardly language of violence and bloodshed. Violent acts against figures of authority such as George Caccavale, and all law enforcement personnel who are doing their duties, are deplorable. A nation which does not adequately protect those it vests with the responsibility of enforcing its laws may ultimately be defenseless against the law-breaking elements within it.

ments within it.

In times such as this when a great personal loss has been sustained, one is somehow left groping for answers, searching for reasons, hoping that our faith in our fellow man and in our God can be strong enough for us to endure. My thoughts and feelings remain with Nancy, his beloved wife and my very dear friend.

Nancy, who helped make George's life so meaningful and worthwhile now finds her own life made empty by his death. To his two young children, Carmine age 9, and 3-week-old Carla, I offer the hope that their lives will be modeled after the fine example left by their father. Young Carmine was so very proud of his father's work in the Transit Police. This was poignantly shown at George's funeral when Carmine wore his father's badge while bravely assisting his mother through the sombrous ordeal.

There was an additional element of tragic irony associated with George's death. On the very morning he died, George was to have been an usher in the wedding of my eldest daughter, Jacqueline. My family's association with George had been long and rewarding. He was like a son to me and a brother to my children. Despite the happiness of that day, all of us felt very empty and sad.

All of us who knew George Caccavale take some consolation from the fact that although his life was short, it was rich with love and feeling for his fellow man. We take solace knowing that we, his friends, are better people, having had my loyal friendship over the years. But it is extremely difficult for us to reconcile the senseless nature of George's death. Death is always a mystery, but it is especially perplexing when it is unexpected and comes to a man who had so much to live for. One of the beatitudes of Christ I consider to be appropriate and it represents my fervent hope for George: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."