

IN HONOR OF THE REVEREND  
JAMES CALVIN HARRIS, SR.

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding Man of God who has been a longstanding source of inspiration, spiritual guidance, and moral leadership to the Columbus, Georgia community, the Reverend James Calvin Harris, Sr. After sixty-four remarkable years of serving as Pastor of Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church in Columbus, Rev. Harris will be retiring this month. A celebration of his well-deserved retirement will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at 11:00 a.m. at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center in Columbus, Georgia.

James Calvin Harris was born in Lee County, Georgia on April 7, 1925 to Elijah and Viola Harris as one of seven children. In 1944, at the age of 18, he began serving our country with courage and distinction in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, Mr. Harris moved to Chicago and worked as a baker and dishwasher but later returned to Georgia to pursue his education. He attended Albany State University and then studied at the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee.

His first church membership was St. Mathew Baptist Church in Lee County, which was pastored at the time by the late Reverend Allen A. Green. It was by this same pastor that Rev. Harris was licensed to the ministry on July 9, 1939 and ordained as a minister on August 10, 1949.

Early on in his career, he pastored at several churches across Georgia, sharing his passion for the teachings of Christ. Following the path that God set out for him, Rev. Harris eventually came to call Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church in Columbus his home. When he began preaching at the church, it was a small wooden building with only 100 members. Thanks to his dedication and enthusiasm, Rev. Harris has been able to build the Church's membership to over 1,000 and make several extensive renovations and additions.

Rev. Harris has always been popular with churchgoers because of the energy he brings to his sermons. Known by many as the "singing and preaching" pastor, Rev. Harris even authored and recorded an original song, "God is a Battle Axe." During the Civil Rights Movement, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. often asked him to perform the song to offer encouragement at mass meetings. A charismatic evangelical leader and pioneer, Rev. Harris' spiritual zeal is both infectious and highly contagious.

Always pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to better improve the craft of Christian ministry and discipleship, Rev. Harris has worked tirelessly to promote Christian values and put them into action in his community. Throughout his career, Rev. Harris has played a leading role in many religious-affiliated and community-based organizations. He has also been honored with various awards and commendations too numerous to list here.

Rev. Harris has accomplished many things in his life but none of these would have been possible without the grace of God and his lov-

ing wife, Maggie, who met her eternal reward in 2012 after sixty-seven years of marriage; their seven children, one of whom is deceased; eleven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. On a personal note, I have truly been blessed by Rev. Harris' sage counsel and enduring friendship over the many years I have known him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to the Reverend James Calvin Harris, Sr. for sixty-four wonderful years of leadership of Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church, over seventy-five remarkable years of ministry, and a lifetime of selfless service to God, the church, and to humankind.

#### VICTIMS' RIGHTS CAUCUS AWARDS 2015

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, crime victims are not statistics.

They are real people with real stories who have had something bad happen to them.

As a former judge, I used to see victims in my courtroom every day.

Unfortunately, too often victims are left out of the criminal justice process.

They are also many times overlooked and forgotten in the legislative process.

When I came to Congress, victims did not have an advocate group of lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

That is why Congressman JIM COSTA, a Democrat from California, and I, a Republican from Texas, founded the Victims' Rights Caucus.

Supporting crime victims is a bipartisan issue.

This week is National Crime Victims' Rights week, and the Victims' Rights Caucus will recognize those tenacious groups and individuals whose life work is to support victims.

I was proud to nominate Truckers Against Trafficking for the Suzanne McDaniel Memorial Award for Public Awareness.

Much like the award's namesake, Truckers Against Trafficking has pioneered efforts in the victims' rights community.

Truckers Against Trafficking is a traveling nonprofit group that works to educate and raise awareness for trafficking in the trucking industry.

These truckers know what signs to look for in a trafficking victim and are proactive in their efforts to rescue these victims from their trafficker.

Congressman JIM COSTA (CA-16) recognized community leader Sergeant Jeff Kertson for the Allied Professional Award.

Sergeant Kertson oversees several units for the Fresno County Sheriff's Department.

This includes the domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual assault, child abuse, sex offender registration, missing persons/runaways units, as well as a predator program and task force.

Sergeant Kertson really goes above and beyond to make victim services a priority to ensure a safer Fresno community.

The Ed Stout Memorial Award honors the legacy of the Director of Aid for Victims of Crime of St. Louis, Missouri, one of the Na-

tion's oldest three victims' assistance organizations.

Ms. Mary Travers Murphy, nominated by Congressman BRIAN HIGGINS (NY-26), has been a champion for domestic violence victims in her community.

Her work as the Executive Director of the Family Justice Center of Erie County (FJCEC) raising funds for domestic violence victims has resulted in the opening of two suburban satellite FJCEC centers in Erie County.

Her efforts have strengthened her Erie community.

Another community leader that deserves recognition is Ms. Kerri True-Funk.

She was nominated for the Lois Haight Award of Excellence and Innovation by Congressman RODNEY DAVIS (IL-13).

Kerri is the Executive Director of Rape Advocacy, Counseling and Education Services (RACES).

Kerri has championed efforts of prevention and education, which makes her the perfect candidate for the Lois Haight Award, working to prevent crime before it happens.

Kerri deserves to be honored for her work with RACES—reducing the occurrence of sexual assault among individuals with disabilities through empowerment education.

Victim advocates are wonderful people.

Many of them I have met over the years are even more special because they have used their personal experience to help others.

That is what the recipient of the Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award did.

William Kellibrew, nominated by Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (DC), had a traumatic past but he chose to fight back.

He is the founder of the William Kellibrew Foundation (WKF), a community-driven partnership that advocates on breaking the cycles of violence and poverty.

The WKF provides support networks for victims while they rebuild their lives.

People like William are living examples of how survivors can use their experiences to empower others.

The Victims' Rights Caucus is also recognizing Robin Smith, the founder of Video Action.

Video Action produces training instructional videos to educate victim advocates.

Robin reaches a vast audience through her videos which has spread awareness about victims issues to victim advocates.

Every single one of these recipients are warriors fighting to protect innocent victims and prevent further crimes.

We thank them for what they do for not only their communities, but for our nation.

Restoring the lives of victims is not easy work, but it's the Lord's work, saving people one at a time.

And that is just the way it is.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. SEAN P. DUFFY**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, I was at home in Wisconsin due to an unexpected family emergency. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following ways: on roll call no. 162 (H. Con. Res. 25)—

Authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition—Yea.

RECOGNIZING CHRIS JOONDEPH,  
DUNCAN YOST, GARRETT KRAL,  
AND MITCHELL MONREAL

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chris Joondeph, Duncan Yost, Garrett Kral, and Mitchell Monreal for their hard work and dedication to the people of Colorado's Sixth District as interns in my Washington, DC office for the Spring 2015 session of Congress.

The work of these young men has been exemplary and I know they all have bright futures. They served as tour guides, interacted with constituents, and learned a great deal about our nation's legislative process. I was glad to be able to offer this educational opportunity to these four and look forward to seeing them build their careers in public service.

All four of our interns have made plans to continue their work next year with various organizations in both Colorado and Washington. I am certain they will succeed in their new roles and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Chris Joondeph, Duncan Yost, Garrett Kral, and Mitchell Monreal for their service this spring.

TRIBUTE TO JEANNE D'AGOSTINO  
RODRIGUEZ

**HON. JOHN L. MICA**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, today in my home town of Winter Park, Florida, we will lay to rest a Central Florida community leader and American Patriot, Jeanne D'Agostino Rodriguez.

It has been my privilege to know Jeanne and her family for more than four decades, and it has been my honor to call her my friend. She was a Republican stalwart, and a successful businesswoman with an untiring record of community service. We shared mutual passions for good government, family and faith and an appreciation of our Italian heritage.

The Rodriguez and D'Agostino families have been leading restaurateurs in Central Florida, beginning with their restaurant, La Cantina, which they sold and created the renowned Villa Nova restaurant which, over the years, received numerous culinary awards and was a Winter Park landmark.

Jeanne, who was preceded in death by her beloved husband John, and two brothers, was a respected business woman and community activist. In Central Florida politics, Jeanne was the Grand Dame of the Republican Party. She worked tirelessly to build the GOP in its lean beginning years in Florida and served in county and state Republican leadership positions. She was an early champion behind successful

campaigns of Republican leaders including United States Senator Paula Hawkins and President Ronald Reagan. Some of Jeanne's many charitable endeavors were highlighted by her support for the Morning Star School and Bishop Grady Villas.

Jeanne is survived by her family who she loved so dearly, including her children: Mark Rodriguez and wife Kim; John Rodriguez and wife Vicki; her sisters, Florence Ross and Anna Belitz Powers; her grandchildren: Jordan, Jared, Jenna, Jillian, Rebecca and Elizabeth and by her great granddaughter Aylin.

Most of all, my friend Jeanne Rodriguez was an American Patriot. She loved our country and her family and was devoted in her Catholic faith.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost a great Central Floridian and American. I ask you and our colleagues to join me in recognizing Jeanne's memory as she is laid to rest today in Palm Cemetery in Winter Park, Florida.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOUSING  
FINANCIAL LITERACY ACT OF 2015

**HON. JOYCE BEATTY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, to this day we, as a country, are still working through the devastating effects of the foreclosure crisis. This avoidable tragedy was caused in part by predatory lenders taking advantage of homebuyers who had little or no understanding of the purchases they were making. That is why, in recognition of Financial Literacy Month, I introduced legislation entitled, "the Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2015." This bill would give first-time homebuyers who complete a Department of Housing and Urban Development or HUD-certified housing counseling course a discount on their Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgage insurance premiums of 25 basis points (or 0.25 percent).

For many Americans, owning a home is the cornerstone of achieving the American Dream. Homeownership not only benefits the homeowner's family and surrounding community, it is also linked to improved health and school performance for children. Additionally, FHA provides the gateway to affordable housing for these individuals and families. However, for many prospective first-time homeowners, the process of purchasing real estate may be confusing and daunting and may leave uninformed buyers victims of unaffordable or predatory loans.

The Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2015 would motivate first-time homebuyers to seek vital pre-purchase housing counseling to alleviate the confusion and fears associated with purchasing real estate. These housing counseling programs help prospective homebuyers understand their financing and down-payment options, evaluate their readiness for a home purchase and navigate what sometimes may be a confusing and difficult process. In fact, studies have shown that homebuyers who receive pre-purchase housing counseling courses are nearly one-third less likely to fall behind on their mortgage, and that housing counseling can improve prospective borrowers' access to affordable, prudent mortgage loans.

These programs are so important that just last week, HUD awarded more than \$36 million in housing counseling grants to hundreds of national, regional and local organizations to help families and individuals with their housing needs and to prevent future foreclosures. Consequently, an additional benefit of housing counseling is a reduction in delinquencies or default by better-informed first-time homebuyers. The Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2015 would encourage first-time homebuyers to take advantage of these critical counseling resources that can increase their financial literacy skills and capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that first-time homebuyers have the knowledge and tools necessary to be successful homeowners is an objective that we can all share. I would like to thank the Members of Congress who signed on as original co-sponsors of this bipartisan bill, including the Democratic and Republican Co-Chairs of the Financial Literacy Caucus, and urge my colleagues to join in our efforts to increase financial literacy by adding their names to the Housing Financial Literacy Act of 2015.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS ABOLITION  
AND ECONOMIC AND ENERGY  
CONVERSION ACT OF 2015

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 22, 2015*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, on Earth Day, I am introducing the Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2015, a version of which I have introduced since 1994, after working with the District of Columbia residents who were responsible for the Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion ballot initiative passed by D.C. voters in 1993. This version of the bill now requires the United States to immediately begin negotiating an international agreement to disable and dismantle its nuclear weapons, to provide for strict control of fissile material and radioactive waste, and to use nuclear-free energy.

The bill continues to provide that the funds used for nuclear weapons programs be redirected to human and infrastructure needs, such as housing, health care, Social Security, restoring the environment, and creating carbon-free, nuclear-free energy. This conversion to a peace economy would occur when the President certifies to Congress that all countries possessing nuclear weapons have begun elimination under international treaty or other legal agreement.

The bill is particularly timely as countries of the world meet at the United Nations to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the possibility of a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.

Our country still has a long list of urgent domestic needs that have been put on the back burner. As the only nation that has used nuclear weapons in war, and that still possesses the largest nuclear weapons arsenal, I urge support for my bill to help the United States reestablish our moral leadership in the world by redirecting funds that would otherwise go to nuclear weapons for urgent domestic needs.