

Service-owned Rock Creek Park, in the District of Columbia, as “Rock Creek National Park.” Renaming this park will highlight its significance to the nation, including visitors to the nation’s capital, and will help get much-needed funding for the park’s inviting trails, waterways and other unique features.

Rock Creek Park is already a national park, established by Congress in 1890 “for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States,” and is the oldest urban park and the third federal park ever created, after Yellowstone and Sequoia. Rock Creek Park was designed to preserve animals, timber, forestry and other interests in the park, and to ensure that its natural state is maintained as much as possible, for all American people, not just for D.C. residents.

Over time, several structures have been established or donated to further preserve Rock Creek Park. In 1892, for example, the federal government acquired Peirce Mill in Rock Creek Park, one of the mills used by local farmers during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. In 1950, the Old Stone House, located at 3051 M Street NW., with its great pre-Revolutionary War architectural merit, was acquired by the park. The building was restored, and programs explain the house’s rich history from the colonial period to the present day. The Fort Circle Parks were also acquired to interpret and preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, which created a ring of protection for the nation’s capital during the Civil War.

Today, Rock Creek Park offers residents of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Northern Virginia, as well as thousands of visitors, an escape from our increasingly urban environment. Residents and tourists alike also enjoy many activities in the park’s 2,000 acres, including hiking and bike riding on the historical trails, horseback riding, picnicking, tennis and other recreational activities in some of the open fields. Our residents have expressed their appreciation by volunteering to clean up and maintain the trails and waterways.

Redesignating Rock Creek Park as Rock Creek National Park will help recognize the national status of the park and protect and revitalize this remarkable resource in our nation’s capital.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

**HONORING 2017 MONSTER ENERGY
NASCAR CUP SERIES CHAMPION
MARTIN TRUOX, JR.**

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Martin Truex, Jr. on winning the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championship in historic fashion.

The journey to Martin Truex Jr.’s success came with a lot of adversity, both on the track and in Martin’s personal life. On the personal side, Martin and his partner, Sherry Pollex, faced one of life’s toughest challenges when Sherry was diagnosed with Stage III ovarian

cancer three years ago. Sherry has faced this challenge with the heart of a champion. She’s continued to fight this dreaded disease even when it returned earlier this year, and Sherry has used her personal battle as an opportunity to advocate for cancer patients everywhere through her work with the Martin Truex, Jr. Foundation and SherryStrong.org. She has inspired millions through her work, and as Martin will tell you, Sherry is the true champion in their family.

On the track, Martin has faced his own adversity. In 2013, through no fault of his own, Martin ended up losing his ride. Instead of giving up, Martin turned this setback into an opportunity—he landed on his feet at Furniture Row Racing and became a champion four short years later.

Martin is a champion on the track and in life. Today I have the honor of congratulating Martin Truex, Jr. on winning of the 2017 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championship, and I can’t think of anyone who deserves this victory more than him.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in honoring a true champion in every sense of the word, Martin Truex, Jr.

TAYLOR FORCE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ANTHONY G. BROWN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2017

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, today in Israel and Palestine—it’s hard to see fertile ground for peace. Peace is cultivated by tolerance and mutual understanding; when we work to move beyond hatreds and accept paths of compromise.

I’m disappointed that the Palestinian Authority has continued to fund further bloodshed and hatred by tolerating, encouraging, and even glorifying violence. They do so by making payments to those who kill in the name of hatred. This year alone, the Palestinian Authority has devoted hundreds of millions of dollars in its budget to provide payments to Palestinians in prison for terrorist attacks, and to the families of those who died while carrying out such attacks.

The Palestinian system provides more money to those who serve longer sentences, meaning the more heinous the attack—the greater the financial compensation. These payments are higher than the assistance provided to Palestinians living in poverty, and is four times higher than the average salary in the West Bank.

There is no question that this policy of financially rewarding convicted terrorists is abhorrent and must stop.

We’ve heard a lot about Captain Taylor Force—a U.S. citizen, a West Point graduate, and U.S. Army veteran who had survived combat in Iraq and was studying entrepreneurship at Vanderbilt University. Like the men and women with whom I served during my 30 years in the Army, Taylor was an American patriot whose future was bright. Yet his life was stolen from him by a knife-wielding terrorist. Shortly after the murder of Taylor,

Fatah—the political party of President Mahmoud Abbas—posted a statement online praising Captain Force’s attacker as a hero and “martyr.” Taylor wasn’t murdered by a single assailant, but by a political cultural and political system that foments hatred and rewards terror.

Yes, I understand the opposing arguments that seek to justify these payments or attempt to explain the context of the historic and political relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. Yet, the violence is unacceptable and cannot be supported by payments to those who commit violence.

There is no reason to believe these payments will end, without strong external pressure—and year after year, the United States is the largest donor to the Palestinian Authority. The United States government is right to seek a way to convince President Abbas to end this horrible behavior that incentivizes violence against civilians and who sees this as “an integral part of the weave of Arab Palestinian society.” Conditioning our Economic Support Funds might finally convince President Abbas to end financial support for terrorists and their families.

It’s important to note that the House version of this bill preserves humanitarian democracy assistance, that has a direct impact on the daily lives of Palestinians—it will keep a network of hospitals running in East Jerusalem, allow for investments in wastewater infrastructure projects, and continue childhood vaccinations.

While the Taylor Force Act aims to push the Palestinian Authority to stop rewarding hate, violence, and terrorism, we need to do more to change the underlying culture of intolerance between the Israelis and Palestinians. Congress should consider increasing alternative forms of assistance outside of our traditional programs—assistance that could counter the influence of incitements and support civil society.

USAID oversees a \$26 million people-to-people reconciliation fund—of which \$10 million is allocated annually for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—through its Conflict Management and Mitigation program. These grants provide funding for Israeli and Palestinian NGOs that bring people together to change attitudes and build bridges, like the Center for Shared Society that goes into schools to increase dialogue between Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Jewish youth. When I visited Israel in August, I heard directly from prominent Arab Israelis who described to me how effective these programs are.

We should also support economic partnerships that promote the least ideological and most pragmatic elements of Palestinian society—like tech companies and startups—that will increase economic opportunities and improve the quality of life for Palestinians. These include the “Peace for Profits” initiatives.

Directing U.S. taxpayer dollars towards these program, would send a loud and powerful signal that we remain invested in Palestinians and are choosing those who promote reconciliation and peace over those who support violence. The Taylor Force Act gives us an opportunity to reassess our assistance to the Palestinians. And we must do it in a way that brings us closer to peace between Israel and the Palestinians.