

in foster care have chronic medical problems. Subsidized guardianship, like the Federal adoption assistance program, provides needed support to these kinship caregivers to afford appropriate care for these vulnerable children.

Further, kinship navigator programs serve as critical supports to the millions of grandparent caregivers who preventively took on the care of their grandchildren to keep them out of the foster care system. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 2.1 million children living with grandparents or other relatives with no parent present; however, only about 145,000 children in the foster care system live with kinship caregivers. This means that just under 2 million children are being cared for outside of the system and do not have access to subsidized guardianship payments. We must promote kinship navigator programs to help these caregivers understand and access supports to support our youngest citizens.

Research clearly shows that kinship foster care families are safer, more stable placements that are more likely to keep children connected with their siblings and communities than non-relative placements. Further, these placements are cost effective. In Illinois, cost studies found a projected savings of approximately \$48 million over 10 years compared to a matched control group that did not have this option. For these reasons, it is imperative that we promote kinship caregiving within the foster care system, and required notification to relatives is an important step to this end.

The issue of grandparents raising grandchildren is very significant for Illinois and for Chicago specifically. My Congressional District has the highest percentage of children living with kinship caregivers in the U.S., with two other Chicago districts following closely behind. The legislation promises critical financial support to family members raising relatives in foster care. We have more to do, but I applaud the House of Representatives for passing this bill that will do so much for so many.

**COMMENDING THE FIREFIGHTERS FROM CALIFORNIA AND THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES FOR THEIR COURAGEOUS ACTIONS AND SACRIFICES IN FIGHTING THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES**

SPEECH OF

**HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 9, 2008*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the brave firefighters from across California and around the country who have courageously risked their lives to halt the spread of wildfires that continue to devastate California. The dedication and determination of our Nation's first responders and firefighters have helped dramatically contain the nearly 1,800 wildfires that have burned over 829,000 acres, or 1,300 square miles, across California.

These fires have been the most intense and widespread in California's history, and thousands of brave men and women have honored the call to protect our state from these fires. More than 150 firefighters from Sonoma Coun-

ty, in my Congressional District have responded to the fires, and firefighters from Santa Rosa served more than 22 days each, totaling 4,000 hours of their time in June. More than 80 Marin firefighters and other support personnel have been dispatched to fight fires throughout Northern California. In addition to the unrivaled contributions of the California's firefighters, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger called up 2,400 National Guard troops join the fire crews. Furthermore, firefighters from 41 states, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have all offered their support, resources, and manpower during this crisis.

The bravery of these committed first responders and the tremendous sacrifices they made to help fight California's fires have not gone unnoticed. Our firefighters deserve the highest commendation for putting themselves in the line of danger. That's why I am proud to support H. Res. 1322, a resolution honoring the firefighters from California and throughout the United States for their heroism and sacrifices in fighting the California wildfires. These brave men and women deserve no less.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 17, 2008*

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, July 16, 2008, I missed the rollcall vote No. 507, had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote No. 507: "nay" (On Passage of H.R. 415 to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Taunton River in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System).

**A TRIBUTE TO POLK ROBISON**

**HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 17, 2008*

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this time to remember Polk Robison, a lifelong supporter of District 19's Texas Tech University. Mr. Robison passed away June 27, 2008, at the age of 96.

Polk Robison was best known for his service to Texas Tech Athletics, where he was a champion basketball player, coach, and athletic director. Mr. Robison's devotion to his alma mater helped push Texas Tech Athletics into the Southwest and Big 12 Conferences and into the national spotlight.

Born in Springfield, Tennessee, Mr. Robison and his family moved to Texas when he was 14. He graduated from Lubbock High School and then from Texas Tech in 1934, earning not only a degree in journalism, but also three consecutive Border Conference basketball championships as a center.

Mr. Robison's love of sports led to an early career in coaching football at Burk Burnett High School, which soon turned to working for General Motors in Houston. His passion for athletics and Texas Tech brought him back to the

university in 1941 as an assistant football and basketball coach. The following year, Mr. Robison moved into the head basketball coach position and remained there for 18 seasons, accumulating a record of 249–196, three Border Conference titles, and a Southwest Conference championship—ranking him second in all-time victories of any Texas Tech coach.

His talents extended beyond the basketball program. Mr. Robison served a short stint as the university's tennis coach, leading the team to a Southwest Conference championship.

He made a gradual change into a ten-year career as Texas Tech's athletic director and retired in 1977 while serving as the athletics administrator for finance and development. He continued to attend Red Raider basketball games until he was 95.

Mr. Robison's devotion overflowed to the community. He served the Lubbock Rotary Club for 40 years, and the Westminster Presbyterian Church named its park in honor of Mr. Robison, a church elder, and his wife, Stephanie.

His student jersey number—appropriately, the number one—hangs retired in the university's United Spirit Arena. Former head basketball coach Bob Knight permanently designated a Polk Robison chair next to the team's bench at every home game, bearing the name of this university legend.

Mr. Robison cared deeply for his family: his wife, the late Stephanie Corley Robison and his three children, Bill, Kay, and Anne. He also made a lasting impression on his players for his professionalism, caring nature, and motivation. He enjoyed seeing them not only grow as athletes, but grow into men.

Those from District 19, including myself, will miss Mr. Robison's enthusiasm for life, dedication to improvement, and tenacity in making Texas Tech a respected and outstanding institution.

**TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL**

**HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 17, 2008*

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 40th anniversary of an organization that has profoundly enriched the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities and society as a whole through sports competition. Special Olympics International has promoted the benefits of sports competition for individuals with intellectual disabilities since 1968, when Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics and convened its first International Games in Chicago.

Two years later, in 1971, Special Olympics Missouri opened its doors and started programs for Missourians with intellectual disabilities. For more than 36 years, Special Olympics Missouri has been providing sports training and competitions for athletes ages 8 and up.

The first Missouri Summer Games were held in 1975, that same year Missouri Special Olympics sent its first athletes to International Summer Games. Except for a brief hiatus in Columbia, Missouri—my hometown—the State Summer Games have been held at Fort Leonard Wood.