DUCKWORTH from Illinois and TIM WALZ from Minnesota and JEFF MILLER from Florida decided to do something about it.

The power of this is when you have that broad of a political spectrum that says we are not going to tolerate this, that we are going to make sure that this issue is not lost in the shuffle, that this is not a statistic, that this is not 22. Rather, these are people who are going to be named; these are people who are going to be discussed; and these are people who are going to be defended.

□ 1530

So I am happy today to join with those who are asking for favorable passage of the Clay Hunt SAV Act.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Providing sufficient and effective mental health care to our veterans is an issue that I believe we must focus on. It is an issue that I hope will bring comprehensive policies in the next Congress. Finding real solutions will require all of us working together and will require sufficient resources and dedication.

I know my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota, will be at the forefront of this fight, joined by Chairman MILLER, Ranking Member-elect Ms. BROWN, and all of the Republicans and Democrats on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. But I will not be in the House of Representatives next session to join that fight.

In my years in Congress, I have worked hard toward solutions that provide modern and effective care and benefits for our veterans. I have fought against inadequate budgets and for resources necessary to do the job. I have worked hard to improve the care and benefits of our newest veterans, while never forgetting our veterans from previous conflicts.

I have been encouraged by what we have all been able to accomplish together. But there is more that we have to do, and I know my colleagues will not give up the fight until we have won that battle.

But I do want to thank Chairman MILLER for his leadership, his support, and his friendship over the years. It has been an honor to work with Chairman MILLER, and it has been a pleasure to serve with him as well.

I also want to thank the members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, both past and present. They have been true colleagues, mentors, and friends.

I want to wish the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN), our ranking member-elect, the best of luck, and I hope that she will enjoy her time as ranking member as much as I have enjoyed my time as ranking member.

And for the staff, both the majority and minority staff, they are the ones that make Members look good. They work very hard day and night to make sure that the policies that the members of the committee want are put into legislation.

I can say truly that the majority and minority staff in this Congress has worked very well together. They have put aside the partisanship that other committees have not. So I thank them for their hard work and dedication to making sure that we do what we are here to do, and that is to serve our veterans.

There is no more noble calling than serving those who have served this great Nation of ours.

And to my colleagues here in Congress who are veterans and to America's veterans, I will simply say, thank you. Thank you for your service to this great Nation of ours. It is because of you that we are the country that we are today. You never turned your back. You never faltered. And some of you have made the ultimate sacrifice and have given your life for this country. So thank you for your service.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this bill and move it to the Senate.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would be remiss if I did not say thank you to the gentleman from Maine, MIKE MICHAUD. As the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we, as a team, along with the members and the staff, have accomplished much this year, but it has all been done in a bipartisan way. We were able to move large pieces of legislation that will impact, in a positive way, veterans for years to come.

We uncovered probably the largest scandal that has ever been uncovered at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and we are now turning that agency in a direction to where it serves the veterans and not itself.

This wouldn't have happened without the steady hand of the gentleman from Maine, MIKE MICHAUD, as the ranking member. Again, he is a fine man. He has been a great Representative, and he is a friend that will be missed. I look forward to going to Maine one day and hunting moose with MIKE, whom I have pestered for 12 years to get a chance to go up and visit. But we will miss him, and we wish him well.

And with that, I want to take a moment to express my condolences and my appreciation to Clay's family, whom I understand are in the Capitol with us today, as well as to all the families of veterans who have lost their lives to suicide. My thoughts and my prayers are with each of them.

Once again, I encourage all the Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I was proud to help introduce H.R. 5059, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act with Chairman JEFF MILLER and Representative TIM WALZ.

This bipartisan bill, named after 28-year-old Marine Veteran Clay Hunt, who tragically took his own life in March 2011, will reduce the barriers that prevent our Veterans from receiving quality mental health care.

It is a heartbreaking reality that twenty-two Veterans take their own lives each day. These are all casualties of war. As a nation, we are failing these brave men and women.

This legislation will task an independent, third party to annually review mental health care and suicide prevention programs and make recommendations on how to improve care. The bill also requires the VA to create a centralized source of information for all mental health services for Veterans. It will also address the shortage of mental health care professionals in order to ensure access to care as demand increases. Finally, through a pilot program, Veterans will receive reintegration assistance directly from the communities in which they live, fostering a smoother and more inclusive transition to life after the uniform.

Just as these Veterans remained faithful to our country on the battlefield, it is our turn as their Representatives to remain faithful to them. When our service men and women make the brave decision to seek help, we must ensure that they can get the quality assistance and treatment they deserve in a timely manner.

I urge all of the Members to support this legislation so that we can begin to turn the tide against suicide.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALMON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5059, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN RALPH HALL

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of this 1 hour Special Order for RALPH HALL.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Speaker for granting us this Special Order to honor Congressman RALPH HALL of the Fourth Congressional District and for granting me this time today.

Although Congressman HALL has been sidelined by a recent accident, he is blessed to be on the mend, and he hopes to express his thanks in person sometime next year. Hopefully he is watching on C–SPAN television right now from Rockwall, Texas. I cannot tell him how many Members wish him the speediest of recoveries and wish that he was with us now.

RALPH has asked me to put in the RECORD the following statement from himself:

''I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to those in the Fourth Congressional District who gave me their vote of confidence time and again, who gave me the benefit of their wisdom and good ideas, and who inspired me to do my best to represent their views and their vision in Washington. You will always be dear to my heart.''

With that, I yield to the distinguished Congressman from Collin County, Texas, Congressman SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor my fellow Texan and dear friend RALPH HALL.

It has been said, ''A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself.'' RALPH embodies these very words. He is a man of honor and integrity, a fierce protector of freedom, and a great conservative. He is a shining example of all that is great about America and the great State of Texas.

RALPH and I have known each other a very long time. I won't say how long. We are blessed to represent neighboring districts. There is no greater friend and ally in Congress than RALPH. We have worked together on a number of issues. Recently, I was pleased to help RALPH with a zebra mussel water bill. That is an important law that helped provide clean water to north Texas.

Now, RALPH is known both around the Hill and back at home for his sense of humor. You might say that is why he has never met a stranger. Every person he meets is not just a friend, but a close friend.

On a more serious note, RALPH is also known for his faithful love of his late wife, Mary Ellen. If you ever visit with RALPH, he will tell you she was the person who encouraged him to enter public service, and since then, she was with him every step of the way.

When RALPH had his chairman portrait painted 2 years ago, he made sure Mary Ellen was a part of that portrait. That love and commitment speaks so highly of RALPH's character.

RALPH, as your colleague, I thank you for your service to your constituents, our great State of Texas, and our great Nation.

As your friend, I thank you for your sense of humor; but, more importantly, I thank you for your loyal friendship. D.C. won't be the same without you. God bless you. I salute you, RALPH.

Mr. BARTON. Thank you, Congressman JOHNSON.

Before I yield to Congresswoman GRANGER, I want to say that most of RALPH's Washington, D.C., staff is watching this.

Janet Poppleton, Christopher Roper Schell, Leslie Coppler, Jessica Carter, Mitzyn De La Rosa, and Van Carver: RALPH wanted me to thank you-all for your service to himself and to the people of the Fourth District of Texas.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlelady from the 12th District of Texas, the Honorable KAY GRANGER.

Ms. GRANGER. Thank you. It is such an honor to speak about our good friend RALPH HALL.

His background and what he has done is really amazing. He joined the Navy in 1942. He went to war. He came back and got an LLB from Southern Methodist University. He was admitted to the Texas Bar and became a county judge, the president of the State Judges and Commissioners Association. He was elected to the State senate and was president pro tem. Then in 1980, he came to the House of Representatives, where he still serves.

The most important thing in RALPH's life, something that JOE BARTON talked about—he said: ''If you are going to talk about how important my life is, you are going to talk about my wife, Mary Ellen,'' the love of his life. They married in 1944 and were married until she passed in 2008.

But we are really not talking about what RALPH HALL did but who RALPH HALL is. Anyone who met him one time, the first thing you think about is that great smile. He was always smiling. He always had a twinkle in his eye and a joke on his lips. There is no one who tells jokes better than RALPH HALL. He has always got a story, and he has always got a joke.

I had to go to The Dallas Morning News for an endorsement at the editorial board one time, and, unfortunately, RALPH was interviewed right before I was. I walked in and they were still laughing at his jokes. No one could even think of a question for me for a while. But he was just that kind of a person. Never said a mean thing about anyone but told a lot of jokes on a lot of people.

So I wish RALPH were here sitting in this Chamber with us tonight, but because of his accident, he is not. But I know he is watching it.

I will say to RALPH, we miss you, and we wish you the very best. It has been wonderful. We are all better for having known you. Thank you.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, before I introduce Congressman NEUGEBAUER, I have already put one statement in the RECORD that RALPH wanted me to read, but by electronic device, he has sent a second statement.

So this is another direct quote from Congressman HALL:

''Although sidelined by a recent accident, I am blessed to be on the mend and hope to express my thanks in person some time next year. It has been a great honor and privilege to represent the good people of the Fourth Congressional District for the past 33 years. I thank them for their vote of confidence over the years, for their wisdom and good ideas, and for inspiring me to represent their views and their vision to the best of my ability.''

With that, I yield to the Congressman representing Lubbock, Texas, where the Ennis Lions will play a high school football game this Friday night, the Honorable RANDY NEUGEBAUER.

□ 1545

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of my friend and colleague, Congressman RALPH HALL. You look at RALPH's life, and it is a record of service to his country. It began in 1942 as a young lieutenant flying an aircraft off of an aircraft carrier. After the war, RALPH came back to this country and started work in the private sector, creating jobs and expanding the economy in Texas.

Later, RALPH would be the county judge for Rockwall, Texas, and then later would be elected as a Texas State senator. In 1980, he was elected to the United States Congress to represent the Fourth District of Texas, where he has represented that district with distinction.

If you ever traveled in RALPH's district and you stop at the 7–Eleven and you stop to get a little gas and you mentioned RALPH HALL, people's faces light up because I bet everybody in RALPH's district has met RALPH because one of the things that he was very diligent about doing was making sure that the people in his district felt represented.

Since his election, he has worked tirelessly here in Congress on a number of issues, and I had the honor and privilege to serve on the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee with RALPH. One of the things I appreciated most about RALPH and I think most of us appreciated is RALPH's sense of humor. Now, that didn't stop him from really asking very direct and grilling questions of witnesses that would come before our committee, and sometimes, it would be a tense moment, but RALPH always had something funny or a story to tell that kind of broke the ice.

You see a number of members of the Texas delegation are here today, particularly the Republican delegation. Every Thursday, we have lunch together and talk about what is good for Texas. The thing that we always looked forward to was we couldn't wait until RALPH got there so RALPH could share a funny story. One of the things that I will miss most about RALPH is

those times when he would be on the floor or he would be at lunch sharing those stories.

Now, one of the things about RALPH is that, as he got older, he got wiser. In fact, he got so wise in 2004 that he realized that he needed to be a part of the Republican Party, so he switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, and we were so glad to welcome him to that.

As I said, it has been an honor and a privilege, RALPH, to be part of your team on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, and it has been a great honor to be one of your colleagues. More importantly, RALPH, we want to thank you for your friendship, your kinship, and, most importantly, your service to this great Nation and to the State of Texas.

With that, we say, RALPH, job well done, God bless you, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Mr. BARTON. I want to thank the gentleman from Lubbock.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the Congressman from the 25th Congressional District of Texas, Mr. ROGER WILLIAMS. Under the newest configuration, he is the only Congressman to ever represent that district, so they must love him.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand here today with my Texas colleagues and say a few words about our most treasured friend, mentor, leader, and hero, RALPH HALL. RALPH's lifetime of service to his country and fellow man are full of victories, as we already heard, and highlights too numerous to count.

As a young lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, RALPH served his country and flew planes in World War II. Once the next Congress convenes, we will sorely miss the only two remaining World War II veterans currently in Congress, also including Congressman DINGELL.

RALPH HALL has an appreciation for America that very few of us can understand. He understands sacrifice, he understands service, and he understands putting one's self aside for the greater good.

My friend has always been an accomplished businessman, having successfully served in a number of executive roles in the private sector. He brought his business savvy and military experience to Congress, which undoubtedly contributed to his reputation for being one of the most respected and well-liked Members we have ever had.

His ability to bring humor into every situation was not just to get a laugh; it was his unique way of bringing different viewpoints together to find common ground.

Mr. Speaker, Congressman RALPH HALL has served north Texas well and deserves recognition for his many legislative accomplishments. I am grateful to have served with my friend and a patriot whose leadership, spirit, and statesmanship will always be greatly missed.

I wish him all the best as he continues to serve Texas, America, and his community back home. I will always pray for RALPH and his family.

Mr. BARTON. I want to thank you, Congressman.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the Congressman from the First Congressional District, deep east Texas, the soft-spoken Congressman LOUIE GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here honoring RALPH HALL. He has been my Congressman for many years; and, in fact, after being on the bench for about 10 years, I had a feeling that perhaps I ought to legislate, and I wouldn't do it from the bench. But my Democratic Congressman RALPH HALL, from conversations, he talked like I did—I hope that is not disrespectful to RALPH—but I told him, as long as he is my Congressman, I didn't have any need to run because he would represent me well.

Then we had redistricting in 2003, and it opened up a different district. But I felt that way then, if he had stayed my Congressman, I never had a need to run, so some wish we didn't have redistricting.

As I hear people talk about his age, I think about RALPH saying that when he turned 90, somebody on his staff said: ''Congressman HALL, would you rather we didn't mention to people that you are 90?'' He said: ''No, I am fine with that. I would a lot rather you say he is 90 than, 'Doesn't he look natural?' ''

Having been with RALPH yesterday there in Rockwall as he is going through rehab, actually, he doesn't look natural at all, he looks great, and we just look forward to the days when he is fully out of the wheelchair and that rod in his leg is not bothering him as much as it is now. We miss him very much.

He did also provide me a quote that struck him having been chairman of the Science Committee. This is a quote RALPH sent:

> We are reminded of the responsibility given to us by the scripture engraved on the hearing room wall of the Science Committee from Proverbs 29:18, ''Where there is no vision, the people perish.''

Well, RALPH's eyesight was 20/20. He could see where we have been, and he could see where we were going. It was an honor, a pleasure, and a real privilege to serve with my friend, RALPH HALL.

Mr. BARTON. I thank Congressman GOHMERT.

I now yield to the gentlewoman that represents part of Dallas County in Dallas, Texas, the Honorable EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, who comes from the same hometown as I do: Waco, Texas.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. I am delighted to join you in saying some words about RALPH HALL, my friend.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my honor and privilege to serve with my colleague and friend. We had some laughs just recently when I visited him about our history and working together in elective office.

Our relationship goes back to when I was in the Texas house—and I left the Texas house in the seventies—talking about things that we remembered. I really regret that he is not here today, but he wanted to be, and he planned to be, but he is not going to make it today.

As all of you have had the pleasure of serving with RALPH, we are missing out on several jokes and stories. Some of them were really funny, and some can't be said in some places, so I won't try to match him in storytelling.

I am going to tell you a little story that happened when RALPH switched parties. I called him and called him and called him and called him, and I couldn't get through, nor did he return my calls until I finally said, ''Well, just tell him I still love him, and I don't care what party he is in.''

Thirty seconds later, he returned my call, and he said, ''I just couldn't take another bawling out from a woman.'' He said, ''I have gotten it from my sister. I got it from my wife.''

I said, ''But do you know what? Probably nobody understands more than I do because I have been watching your numbers.'' So it never interfered with our relationship.

When he was chair of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, two of the years that he was chair, I was the ranking member. He never hesitated to reach across the aisle to try to reach consensus. Really, that is the kind of spirit we need now. I will miss him for that. I will miss him because of the history we both shared.

Our districts used to come right next to each other. Now, there are a couple of people that come in between us, but it won't divide our friendship, and I look forward to our continued friendship for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I have learned so much from him. I remember when I first came, he was the person who taught me how to make arrangements to go home every week with the airline that we use and also taught me how to find rooms and shortcuts of how to get where you need to go on this Hill, which is rather complicated when you first get here. He will be greatly missed.

He has meant a lot, and he has done a lot. The space exploration program will be forever grateful to him. The Science, Space, and Technology Committee research and all it stands for will always have RALPH HALL as a part of its history.

I appreciate the opportunity to have had a chance to work with him, to know him and his family, and to wish him well.

Mr. BARTON. I want to thank you, Congressman JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the Congressman from Fort Bend County, Sugar Land, Texas, a Navy pilot himself, as RALPH HALL was in World War II, the Honorable PETE OLSON.

□ 1600

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas for that kind introduction.

May 3, 1923, RALPH HALL was born in Fate, Texas. There could not be in the whole world a better name to describe a man's life than being born in Fate, Texas.

Fate touched RALPH in many ways. RALPH is a young man in Rockwall, Texas, pumping gas as a teenager. Guess who drove up and bought gas from my friend RALPH HALL? Bonnie and Clyde, the gangsters.

Mr. BARTON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. OLSON. Yes, sir, I will yield to my friend.

Mr. BARTON. There is no proof of that. I know the Congressman actually states it as a fact, but I have repeatedly asked him to prove it, and he has absolutely failed. So that is an urban myth of the Fourth Congressional District.

Mr. OLSON. Reclaiming my time, my friend said, when he saw them, he didn't know who they were, but he got a quarter, a maximum amount of money for a tip. He walked in so proud to show his boss what had happened; he had gotten a huge tip. The paper was there right beside the floor. He saw this man and this woman. He pumped gas for those two felons.

Now, when he told his boss who they were, he called the local sheriff. The sheriff said: Thank you so much for calling. I have gotten a call about two stray dogs. Once I catch those dogs, I will go after Bonnie and Clyde.

Fate and RALPH HALL, but fate didn't stop there.

As was mentioned, RALPH was a naval aviator, a pilot in World War II. He did his flight training in Pensacola, Florida. He was there with a marine, a guy named Ted Williams, The Splendid Splinter, batted .403 in 1941.

Mr. BARTON. Will the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. OLSON. I yield to my friend for a minute, yes, sir.

Mr. BARTON. Well, while the Bonnie and Clyde story is more fiction than fact—RALPH would have been pumping gas at the ripe old age of 8 or 9 years old for that to be true—the Ted Williams story is fact and is true.

Mr. OLSON. I thank my friend.

The story is RALPH knows Ted is there. He is in the Marines, part of the Navy. RALPH has an idea—baseball game against Army. I will take all their paychecks. I have got Ted Williams. The day of the game comes, knocks on Ted's door, he had some fishing gear: HALL, let's go fishing.

RALPH tried to stop him.

Ted, Ted, I have told my wife Mary Ellen I am coming home with a big paycheck. I bet my whole paycheck on this game. RALPH held the fence up so Ted Williams could go AWOL. Navy lost the game and RALPH had it rough at home with Mary Ellen.

Fate touched RALPH HALL one more time. As the chairman of the NASA committee here in Congress, RALPH HALL is friends with great Americans. This picture shows the greatest, that man right there named Neil Armstrong, the first American to walk on the Moon. Next to him, Colonel Tom Stafford, another Apollo astronaut; and right by the microphone there, Captain Gene Cernan, the only man to go to the Moon twice, on Apollo 10 and Apollo 17.

Fate touched RALPH HALL's life. Fate touched our lives by giving RALPH HALL to us. He is America's best. He is Texas' best.

RALPH, we love you. God bless you. Bravo Zulu. May you have fair winds and following seas.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman from Sugar Land. I now yield to Congressman GENE GREEN, who represents the Houston ship channel and the battleship Texas and other such notable Texas landmarks.

Mr. GREEN.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure about a noted Texas landmark, but I want to thank you for scheduling a Special Order for our good friend, RALPH HALL.

I rise to pay tribute to a great American who has dedicated his life to protecting and serving our Nation and the great State of Texas, Representative RALPH HALL, a true gentleman.

RALPH began his commitment to service seven decades ago when he joined the United States Navy and served as an aircraft carrier pilot during World War II. Returning to Texas after the war, RALPH began private law practice in Rockwall, Texas, where he served as county judge in the 1950s and represented that area in the Texas State Senate from 1962 to 1972.

That is when I first met RALPH HALL, because in 1972 he ran for Lieutenant Governor in Texas in the Democratic primary. There were a few other folks in that race, so RALPH didn't make it into the runoff. But RALPH was elected to Congress in 1980 as a conservative Democrat, where he served our State honorably on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Science Committee, where he was chairman from 2011 to 2013.

In 2003, RALPH became a Republican. His votes were always conservative, though. My job in the 1990s as a deputy whip on the Democratic side was to whip Texas Members. So I would go to RALPH, and he was the distinguished gentleman. And that is just not a title; he really was. He would tell me, he said: Well, GENE, what do you want me to do?

I said: Well, RALPH, I want you to vote thisaway.

He said: You know, GENE, I can't really do that.

I said: Well, RALPH, can you vote late?

RALPH was always a conservative, no matter what Republican or Democratic label he had. I had the honor of serving with RALPH in Congress since 1993 and on the Energy and Commerce Committee since 1997, and RALPH has always been, like I said, a true gentleman to me and to all I have ever seen him work with.

I will best remember RALPH as a true hero of Texas who was a committed public servant, either in uniform or elected official, and always stayed true to his beliefs and did everything he could for his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, Congressman HALL will be sorely missed by all of us, and I want to thank him for both his hard work and dedication for years, but more importantly for his friendship to a lot of Members—not just Texans, but a lot of Members in Congress. RALPH will be very fondly remembered.

Mr. BARTON. Now I yield to the distinguished Congressman from, I believe, Flower Mound, Texas, in Denton County, the Honorable MICHAEL BURGESS.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, thank you, chairman, and thank you for calling this hour together.

Of course, the ranks of those who are able to capably deliver a narrative in this House suddenly have gotten a little thinner, but I did have the opportunity to sit down and visit with Mr. HALL just a few days before Thanksgiving, and I know how intense was his desire to be here and be able to talk on the floor today on his own behalf.

RALPH, sadly, that didn't come to pass. I hope you are able to watch today. I hope you are able to hear the accolades of all of your colleagues. We miss you, RALPH. We wish you nothing but the best going forward.

Again, the ranks of the capable narrative deliverer here in the House of Representatives has gotten a little thinner at the end of this term.

Mr. BARTON. I now yield to Mr. BLAKE FARENTHOLD, the Congressman from Corpus Christi, Texas.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Thank you, Chairman BARTON.

It is great to be here to talk a moment or two about my good friend RALPH HALL. When I was first elected to Congress a few years back, RALPH was one of the first people that I met, being a Texan, and I tell you, he has the kindest heart and always has a smile on his face and a good joke ready at hand.

You know, people ask me: What do you see as your career as a Congressman? Who do you look up to? Where do you see your career in Congress going?

I might want to grow up to be RALPH HALL.

Then some of his adversaries said he was getting too old to be in Congress, and RALPH jumped out of a perfectly good airplane. I had to rethink, ''I want to grow up to be RALPH HALL,'' after he jumped out of a perfectly good airplane.

But I tell you, it is a reflection of the courage and dedication that a man like RALPH HALL has. RALPH was committed to serving Texas and the folks that he represented, and he would go to any length, including jumping out of a

perfectly good airplane, to continue to serve.

It was an honor and a privilege to have spent 4 years of my life as a colleague of RALPH's, and it has been the greatest 4 years of my life. It is an honor and privilege to have served with him, and he truly will be missed.

I appreciate the opportunity, Chairman BARTON, to be on the floor today to acknowledge my friend and, quite frankly, one of my strongest mentors here in Congress, RALPH HALL.

God bless you, RALPH. We are going to miss you.

Mr. BARTON. I now yield to the gentleman from the 14th District of Illinois, Congressman HULTGREN.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, it is such a privilege to be able to say a few words for my good friend and my chairman, chairman of the Science Committee when I first was elected to Congress 4 years ago. I had the privilege of serving under Chairman HALL on the Science Committee. A couple memories that I have of so many committees that I went to where the committee would stop because we were laughing so hard with a statement or comment or joke, perfectly timed joke that Chairman HALL would put in, and so I enjoyed that time so much.

My wife and I had an incredible privilege this summer. We have, among ourselves here in Congress, some wonderful people we get to serve with. A few of them truly are heroes, and one of those heroes is RALPH HALL. We had the privilege of going to the 70th anniversary of D-day to recognize those World War II veterans, and RALPH HALL was with us on that trip. We all loved being there, but everybody wanted to be with RALPH HALL—again, a true hero. To be in that place with RALPH HALL was a great, great honor for my wife and me.

My greatest memory since I have been here over the 4 years was with Chairman HALL, and that was in the Science Committee and having the privilege of sitting about 10 feet away from Neil Armstrong and Captain Gene Cernan—the first man to walk on the Moon and the last man to walk on the Moon, people who changed the trajectory of this Nation and this world—and having the opportunity to talk with them and get to know them and to hear their amazing story, but also the humility that they had, that same humility that Chairman HALL has. Just a privilege to serve.

RALPH, we love you. I wish so much that you could be here today to be able to express your own heart for the privilege I know that you felt serving in this incredible place, serving the wonderful constituents you have in Texas. But I want you to know that we love you, we miss you, we are praying for you, and we are excited to see, hopefully soon, a full recovery for you. We are looking forward to having you back here and hearing those great jokes once again.

So, RALPH, I want to let you know that we are pulling for you and excited again for all that you have done and all that you are going to do.

Mr. BARTON. I would now like to yield to Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE, the gentlelady from Houston, Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, and I thank him for holding this Special Order for a very dear friend to all of us, RALPH HALL.

I guess my opening remarks would be that, if you took the greater percentage of all of us Members of the House of Representatives, everyone would rise up and say ''my good friend RALPH HALL'' and really mean it, for he was a good friend and is a good friend to all of us on both sides of the aisle.

When I came to the United States Congress, I went to the Science Committee, and there was RALPH HALL, fighting for the issues that were not only impacting the Nation, but were impacting our great State. No one could doubt that RALPH HALL was a champion for Texas, a champion for the space exploration program.

I used to love getting with him on the floor of the House and strategizing how we could continue to make sure that our human space exploration, our astronauts, and the great research that is done by NASA carries on.

Certainly, as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, he was astutely concerned about the issues of energy, but also health care and many others.

He loved his family, and he forever reminded me of a time when he came to Houston and he had to see his grandson, who is now grown, and I am sure one of RALPH's favorite grandsons, if you will—he loves his family—when he had to get a ride to the hospital where his grandson was, and of course we are so grateful that he recovered. He always tells everyone that I went 30 miles out of my way to take him to that hospital, and I can say to you I did it with joy.

He was always grateful and thankful for friendship and kindness, and he was kind. And I must say that, if he didn't have a career in the United States Congress, he could be a stand-up comic because his timing was everything; his jokes were unique. I don't think they were written anywhere, and of course he was always saying them.

Let me also say, since he has had such a long history, he reminded me of his friendship with the Honorable Barbara Jordan and his friendship with Mickey Leland, two of the predecessors of my particular district.

And then I would offer to say the same remarks that were mentioned just earlier about how excited he was to be in Normandy for the 70th commemoration and have our own special iconic hero, RALPH HALL, who was honored by the French and honored by many. He was a regular hero and a dynamic hero as we went about the town.

My hat is off to RALPH. I know that he will be well. I know that he knows that we love him. But, more importantly, let me salute him as a great American who has served his Nation with dignity and honor and respect and integrity, and who walks the pathway of a congressional person that respects the dignity and integrity of this House and, as well, the friendship of Democrats and Republicans because he calls everyone an American.

Mr. BARTON. I now yield to RANDY WEBER, the Congressman from the 14th District from Friendswood, Texas.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, you may have heard about the revered Halls of Congress, but let me say that there is no more revered HALL of Congress than that of RALPH HALL. Let me tell you why that is.

□ 1615

RALPH HALL was a true Texan and a great American. He is a great example to us all.

As a true Texas gentleman, time and time again, I have seen him demonstrate the art of tact. He once described that art of tact as making someone feel at home when you wish they were.

As a true Texas gentleman, he could do that. As a true Texas gentleman, I saw him time and time again use the art of diplomacy. He explained to me: ''Randy, you know, diplomacy is being able to tell someone to go to Hades and make them happy to be on their way.'' RALPH had that gift.

Let me tell you, RALPH HALL—and I am going to list some descriptions of him alphabetically. He was American through and through. He was charming. He could turn that charm on. You have heard many of our speakers talk about that. He was committed. He was serious about what he did. Elegant. He was a picture of elegance. You could just see it in the way he moved and the way he worked. Funny. Gosh, he was so funny. The fact is I think he was cut out to be a comedian, but he was probably sewn together wrong. Gosh, he was funny at times. Gracious. A true Texas gentleman. A mentor to us, he could be stern when necessary. Strong. Did I mention Texas through and through? Witty. In short, RALPH was a great example.

Mr. Speaker, I end with this acronym. When I think of RALPH—R-A-L-P-H—I think of R, he was real, he was Republican. I think of A, he was American. I think of L, he was a leader. And then I think of P, RALPH was principled. And then I think of H, and he is a hero.

I will end with this—his last name HALL. H stands for hero, A stands for American, and both the Ls stand for the lasting legacy he is going to leave here in the Halls of Congress. When it comes to the Halls of Congress, there is none better than RALPH HALL.

RALPH, we love you, we bid you a great American and a great Texan farewell, but only temporarily. Don't be a stranger.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman.

I now want to yield to the Honorable DANA ROHRABACHER from California's 48th District in Orange County.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I have served in the House of Representatives now for 26 years, and I have met good people and bad people, and I have met people I agree with and whom I like and people I disagree with and I like. We are reflective of the American people.

People ask me, ''What do you think about the United States Congress?'' And I always say, ''It reflects what the American people are all about.''

This is the House of Representatives where we represent all of these parts of our country. Well, RALPH HALL was one of those Representatives who represented the goodness in America and the greatness in America. RALPH HALL was first and foremost, I believe, a patriot who put that above every other one of his considerations.

I was proud to know RALPH. RALPH is still with us, so we shouldn't think of RALPH as being gone from the Earth. For Pete's sake, RALPH is still here, and I hope he is listening right now because we wish him all the best. RALPH HALL is a great American still, but he has left his legacy here behind.

I worked with RALPH on the Science and Space Committee, as they called it, at least they did then—Science, Space, and Technology. RALPH has made enormous contributions to the well-being of our country in two areas in particular.

Number one, he did much to help direct America's space program and keep it a viable effort on the part of the United States to utilize space for the benefit of humankind and, of course, for the purpose of the United States to become a dominant power in the next frontier. His leadership was indispensable to creating the potential that we have today of accomplishing great things in space. And to the things that we have already accomplished, RALPH was right in the middle of it, making sure that job got done.

He also very involved with energy development. I know that there is a little bit of confusion that just because someone is from Texas that they are going to be backing up the oil companies and things such as that. RALPH was a guy who, yeah, he believed in the oil industry, and he was grateful to the oil industry for the good things that it has provided us, the fact that energy and the production of energy is so important to our national well-being. But he was also a man who understood that science was going to develop new methods of energy and was always pushing our committee and the Science Committee to be on the cutting edge of research and development.

When you get people here running for Congress, they run for Congress because they have strong ideas and ideals, often which don't agree with one another. You can imagine trying to get legislation through committees and on the floor of the House, et cetera, when you have people who are having to interact but have different points of view. Well, tensions at that moment can be a blockage to making things better.

RALPH, if anything else, was the guy who was able to eliminate the tension in the air that was getting in the way of getting something done because he had the best sense of humor of any other Member I have ever, ever come across. RALPH, by doing that, kept this body a productive body, and we weren't at each other's throats.

One last note. My father was a pilot during World War II and he flew in the Pacific. I have a very special place in my heart for RALPH HALL and all those guys because RALPH HALL, too, was a pilot in World War II in the Pacific. He is the godfather to us all.

RALPH, we respect you, we honor you, we love you, we are grateful to you for what you meant to our lives and what you have done to help make our country better off. Thank you. God bless.

Mr. BARTON. I want to thank you, Congressman.

I now want to yield to the gentleman from the Fifth District in Dallas, Texas, the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, the Honorable JEB HENSARLING.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise to honor my dear friend and this great patriot from Texas, next door to me in Dallas, RALPH HALL. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I feel most inadequate to the task.

There are a number of Members who come to the House floor and some provide humor. Few have provided more humor than RALPH HALL at times when this body critically needs it.

Some Members come to this body and they become well respected. Certainly that is RALPH HALL.

Some are well liked. That is also RALPH HALL.

Some distinguish themselves for their accomplishments. RALPH HALL will take second place to no one on what he has been able to accomplish in his House career.

Then there is a handful, Mr. Speaker, of true American heroes. RALPH HALL served our Nation with courage and distinction in World War II.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that I am not sure I know any Member who combines them all: respectability, likability, humor, effectiveness, and being a true American hero.

We will miss RALPH HALL. We will miss his wit. But, do you know, Mr. Speaker, even more so I think I will miss his wisdom because there are many times that we have debated various issues either among, perhaps, the Texas delegation or the House as a whole, and occasionally the voices may get a little loud, perhaps the debate gets a little bit confused, and then almost out of nowhere RALPH HALL comes in and imparts his wisdom, and it is like a ray of sunshine piercing the darkness, and I will say, ''Yes, that makes sense,'' and we come together as Members of Congress for the good of America.

I heard the previous speaker speak about it. There is so much we could say about RALPH and his accomplishments. But how ironic in some respects that the oldest Member of the House was so much on the cutting edge of science and technology and has helped this institution lead America into this century. When RALPH HALL has spoken, when he has led, so many have followed.

There are many reasons that it is a privilege to serve in the United States House of Representatives. But one of the great privileges is the people that you meet. There have been none nicer, none wiser, and more accomplished than RALPH HALL.

Mr. Speaker, I will miss, Texas will miss, America will miss RALPH HALL when he leaves this body.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman.

I now yield to the gentleman from Round Rock, Texas, the distinguished JOHN CARTER.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about my friend RALPH HALL. An amazing man. He has done just about anything adventuresome you can think of in your life.

This is the man that tells us that he was a little boy when Bonnie and Clyde went through, and I think he is telling us the truth.

He tells me that he was a fight promoter, and I know he was a fight promoter—I heard it from other people—who turned down a young man from Kentucky named Cassius Clay because he thought he had a glass jaw.

He is a man that served in the wild and wily Texas Legislature and Texas Senate. He once ran for attorney general, and he said he looked in the mirror and thought he saw the attorney general, and it turned out there was another guy that he was seeing in the mirror.

He served in this House both as a Democrat and a Republican and is loved by both parties and respected by both parties.

He had an amazing talent for carrying humor around as a tool of friendship. I just want to share one small thing that livened up a crowd like I have never seen before.

We were at the laying of the keel of the aircraft carrier *George Herbert Walker Bush*. There were about 50 or so people sitting down in chairs in the hot sun. They put a bottle of water under each chair. I was sitting next to RALPH on the front row. He looked down there underneath his chair and he saw that bottle of water. All these people were sweltering behind us waiting for the thing to start. He reached down, he picked up the bottle of water, he got up, and he turned around to the crowd behind him and he said: ''Somebody nice put a bottle of water underneath my chair. Who's got the scotch?'' The crowd just started laughing, everybody relaxed, and the ceremony began.

RALPH made friends like nobody else. He is my friend. I think every Member of this House considers him a friend.

He is a great American, a great Texan, and I am going to miss him dearly.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman.

May I inquire how much time I have remaining, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 8 minutes remaining.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, we have had a number of Congressmen come on the House floor and tell anecdotes about RALPH, about how funny he was and how smart he was, and they are all—at least the ones about how smart he was—very true.

We have heard the urban myth about waiting on Bonnie and Clyde, which I do not believe is true. We have heard about Ted Williams and RALPH and Ted playing on the same baseball team in World War II, and that is true. We have heard about the offer to serve as a fight promoter for Cassius Clay, who later became Muhammad Ali, and that is true.

A few more that you may not know: He was good friends with the Hunt brothers in Dallas and Clint Murchison, who was the original owner of the Dallas Cowboys. At one time, he was asked to be general counsel for what we today call the NFL, which he turned down.

□ 1630

I got to know RALPH when I got elected in 1984. He and I served districts that touch each other. We both live in our districts in Texas, and so we became good buddies because we were always on the first flight to Texas after the last vote at the end of the week and on the last flight before the first vote to Washington at the beginning of the week.

Once we built up enough frequent flyer miles, when there was a complimentary upgrade—we never spent taxpayer dollars to fly in first class—we would fight over who got seat 4F. Because RALPH sweet-talked the special service people at American Airlines, he always won. The only time I have ever gotten seat 4F on American Airlines was when RALPH was not on the plane.

You have heard about the fact that he used to be a Democrat. He was until 2003 or 2004 when he switched parties. One of the first times that I realized how important RALPH HALL was is when the first President Bush won the election to be President of the United States. They called a special meeting over at the Capitol Hill Club on behalf of the National Republican Campaign Committee so that the Republicans in the Congress, who were in the minority, could have a meeting with the incoming President. We thought that was pretty special.

There was a stir in the crowd. We thought it was the President coming in, and it was. The President walked into the room of the Eisenhower Lounge, which the Republicans will know is on the first floor at the Capitol Hill Club.

Before the President began to speak, there was another stir. Through another door that I have never seen used who do you think came into the Capitol Hill Club but RALPH HALL.

Now, what is surprising about that is that at the time, RALPH HALL was a Democrat. RALPH HALL had endorsed George H.W. Bush for President when he was a Democrat, and so he got special recognition at that Capitol Hill meeting.

There have been many great Members from Texas that served in the House since our creation as a State in 1845, Mr. Speaker. Some of the ones that I have enjoyed working with in my tenure are people like Bill Archer of Houston, Jake Pickle, Steve Bartlett, and Sam Hall, but none has been more beloved and none has been more effective than RALPH HALL of Rockwall, Texas.

I have some other things to say, but I see that others are here, so I yield to Mr. WAXMAN, the chairman emeritus and current ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to RALPH HALL, particularly for his earlier years in the House of Representatives when he was a Democrat. He came on the Energy and Commerce Committee early.

We sometimes think about Democrats and Republicans. He became a Republican. He had been a conservative Democrat. Everybody on both sides of the aisle held him in the highest respect because he was a man of integrity and honesty. When he gave you his word, you could count on it.

RALPH and I became friends. I hope that friendship will continue into the future. I want to express to him, his constituents, and his family and friends my admiration for him as a person and my respect for him as a legislator.

I know it is common to say that even though we didn't agree on all things, it didn't make any difference. He always tried to do what he thought was right. As a result, he earned my respect and that of everyone else.

Mr. BARTON. I yield to Mr. SMITH, the chairman of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), my colleague, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, today, we honor the distinguished service of our friend and colleague, RALPH HALL of Texas. If there were a congressional hall of fame, Representative HALL would be a first-ballot inductee. His many years of service were highlighted at the end of 2012 when he became the most senior Member of Congress to ever cast a vote in the House. His career has spanned 34 years.

Since he was 19 years old, he has made his contributions to our country. As a lieutenant in the Navy during World War II, he served as a pilot. Since then, he has never hesitated to accomplish a mission. That mentality has made him a distinguished Member of Congress and a very effective chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Throughout his time in Congress, RALPH HALL has served this institution with style and humor. RALPH always said, ''I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington.'' RALPH has actually achieved that rare combination of both. We thank him for his service to Congress, to the great State of Texas, and to our country.

RALPH has asked me to pass along his comment, ''I am especially partial to my friends from the Texas delegation who represent their district so well and whose integrity and hard work have benefited not only our State, but also our Nation. I thank you for your friendship and countless acts of Congress.''

Mr. BARTON. I now yield to the gentleman from Houston, Texas (Mr. CULBERSON).

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, time is short this evening, but it is such a privilege to be here to honor RALPH HALL.

Proverbs tell us that our good name is worth more than all the gold and silver on Earth, and that is certainly true of RALPH HALL, someone who I immediately bonded with when I came to Congress in 2001.

RALPH has been a mentor, teacher, and a dear, good friend. I could always—as we all could—count on RALPH to do the right things for the right reasons and be a man of his word. His first priority throughout his time here was to do right by the State of Texas.

As LAMAR said so ably, RALPH always believed it is better to be respected at home and make sure the folks there knew what a good job he was doing for them. It was a real privilege for me to be able to serve with that good man. We will surely miss him.

What a privilege to be here tonight to honor him on this special evening.

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. UPTON.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would just say that RALPH HALL is an amazing man. I served with him on the Energy and Commerce Committee a lot of years. I had the luxury of sitting next to him. We have a lot of great stories, that is for sure.

I can remember when he came back to the Science Committee, and we said that we had yet another Texan. He said, ''When I'm done, you'll wish that you had another 10 or 12.''

Mr. BARTON. RALPH, we love you. We will miss you. You are a great guy. We will see you soon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest gratitude for the privilege to represent the good people of the Fourth Congressional District of Texas for the past 33 years. Other than my faith and my family, this has been the greatest blessing of my life and one for which I will always be grateful.

My service spans 5 Presidents and 7 Speakers of the House, and at the age of 91½, I am the oldest Congressman in the history of the House of Representatives—a record that was set at the slightly younger age of 89½. I have had the privilege of serving alongside some of the most dedicated and influential leaders in America's history—men and women on both sides of the aisle whose integrity and hard work have served our Nation well.

To all of you—former and current Members of the House—I thank you for your leadership and for your friendship. It has been an honor to work with you, and we have had our share of agreements and disagreements on many issues. I respect each of you and the people you represent back home—and I am proud to call so many of you my good friends.

I have been fortunate to serve on two great Committees—the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee—throughout these 33 years, with the exception of a two-year leave of absence from Energy and Commerce.

When I first came to Congress after the 1980 election, future Speaker Jim Wright asked me what committees I would like to serve on. I asked for Energy because Texas is an energy state, and I asked for Science and Space because of the importance of the space program to our Nation and the role of the Johnson Space Center in Houston. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to serve on both of these.

The Science, Space, and Technology Committee has helped define the vision and establish the course for our space program, the International Space Station, and scientific research and development. The Energy and Commerce Committee has spurred energy development and innovation, telecommunications breakthroughs, and healthcare reforms, just to name a few. To the members and Chairmen of these Committees, I express my gratitude for your leadership, hard work, and collaboration.

A special thanks goes to Speaker BOEHNER and our Leadership for their confidence in naming me as the Ranking Member of the Science Committee for four years and as Chairman of the Committee in the past Congress, for allowing me to return to Energy and Commerce after the leave of absence, and for granting a waiver to serve on the Science Committee again in this Congress. I also want to express my gratitude to my good friend and Texas colleague LAMAR SMITH, Chairman of the Science Committee, for naming me Chairman Emeritus for the 113th Congress.

I am of course partial to the Texas Delegation—to this great group of men and women who not only represent Texas so well but who also have such a strong commitment to our Nation's prosperity and security. We are like family, and I thank you for your friendship and countless acts of kindness.

As Members of Congress, we could not perform our duties without the aid of dedicated and loyal staff. To my wonderful staff who have guided my office operations and supported me with their hard work, advice, and friendship, I will always be indebted. A special thanks also goes to the talented and dedicated staff of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee who supported me so ably as Ranking Member and as Chairman.

And once again, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to those in the Fourth Congressional District who gave me their vote of confidence time and again, who gave me the benefit of their wisdom and good ideas, and who inspired me to do my best to represent their views and their vision in Washington. You will always be dear to my heart.

As I bid farewell to this great body, I do so with an abiding faith in this institution and in the commitment of those who work here. We are reminded of the responsibility given to us in a scripture that is engraved on the hearing room wall of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee—Proverbs 29:18, ''Where there is no vision, the people perish.''

Throughout my more than 50 years of public service, in the State of Texas and here in Washington, America has faced many challenges, and there are many still facing our Nation today. At 91 years of age, I am looking forward—not back—and I am confident that my colleagues will continue to strive to achieve a vision that is worthy of this great Nation, our people, and our children and grandchildren. May God bless your efforts, and may God continue to bless America.

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a dear friend and colleague, the Dean of the Texas Congressional Delegation: Congressman RALPH HALL of the Fourth District of Texas. RALPH has served the Fourth District with unqualified distinction since his first election in 1980. Throughout his service to the Fourth District and the United States Congress, he always focused on his constituents and at the end of the day, what is best for America and her future.

Twenty years ago when I arrived as a young Congressman, RALPH, being a kind and generous man, reached out and helped me. While he may have forgotten, I remember his kindness to this day. Many are asking him to write a book, and I hope he does. Readers would enjoy his great sense of humor and deep understanding of Texas history.

Mr. Speaker, December 7, 2014 marked the forty-third anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. I want to recognize two departing members who were veterans of World War Two (WW II). First, RALPH HALL joined the United States Navy in December 1942 and served as an aircraft carrier pilot from 1942 to 1945 rising to the rank of Lieutenant (Senior Grade). Secondly, JOHN DINGELL, joined the United States Army in 1944, rose to the rank of Second Lieutenant. And, Mr. Speaker, I should point out that JOHN is the not only the Dean of the Michigan Delegation but also, the Dean of the House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, RALPH and JOHN are departing at the end of this session of Congress. With their departures, when the 114th Congress convenes in January 2015 and for the first time since the 113th Congress convened last year, Congress will be without a member of Congress who served in WW II.

Throughout RALPH's congressional career, he would seek compromise and reach across the aisle to ensure legislation was passed in a bi-partisan manner. RALPH represents what is best about Congress when members work together towards a common good and not for a sound bite.

RALPH was a distinguished member of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee. In, 2013, he was named Chairman Emeritus of the committee for his focus on promoting science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education. Further, RALPH was instrumental in: Ensuring sound science precedes any regulations imposed by the Administration, advancing research and development (R&D) for new technologies to keep America Competitive, expanding production of America's abundant energy resources and seeking alternative sources to reduce costs and increase national security, and maintaining America's preeminence in space.

RALPH will be sorely missed by the Texas Delegation, Members of Congress and their staffs of the United States House of Representatives. RALPH, I wish you fair winds and following seas. Godspeed, my Friend.

Mr. Speaker, there is no one like Texas Congressmen RALPH HALL.

Congressman RALPH HALL is the oldest serving member of Congress, the oldest person to ever serve in the House of Representatives, the oldest person ever elected to a House term and the oldest House member ever to a cast a vote. Mr. HALL is also the last remaining Congressman who served our nation during World War II.

And for all of these accomplishments, I would like to thank and congratulate RALPH one more time for his service to the country and his leadership in the Texas Congressional Delegation.

Born in Fate, Texas on May 3, 1923, HALL did not know of his successful future which was ahead of him. At the age of 19, HALL enrolled into the U.S. Navy where he served as a lieutenant and combat aircraft carrier pilot from 1942 to 1945 during World War II.

After serving for three years, HALL then went on to finish college and received his LL.B. from Southern Methodist University in 1951. He was admitted to the Texas Bar, and practiced law in Rockwall. Mr. HALL also participated in the business side of Rockwall where he took part in serving as President/CEO of Texas Aluminum Corp., General Counsel of Texas Extrusion Co., Chairman of Lakeside News, Inc., and was a founding member of Lakeside National Bank in Rockwall where he currently serves as Chairman of the Board. RALPH had the calling to serve Texas in the political arena in Texas politics, a combat sport. So he began his public service from 1950 to 1962 when he served as County Judge of Rockwall County, Texas.

Mr. HALL also served as President of the State Judges and Commissioners Association in 1958–1959. From 1962 to 1972, Mr. HALL was elected and served as a Texas State Senator where he served as President Pro Tempore in 1968–1969.

Congressman RALPH HALL was first elected to serve the 4th District of Texas in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1980 and has been re-elected to each succeeding Congress.

On November 27, 2012, Congressman HALL became the oldest member in the U.S. House of Representatives to ever cast a vote. The following month, on December 25, 2012, he became the oldest-serving Member of the U.S. House of Representatives in recorded history.

Congressman HALL always ensured to serve his people and made sure their voice was heard on different issues throughout Congress. A noteworthy quote Mr. HALL often said was ''I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington.''

RALPH is a hardcore Texan with the unique knowledge of understanding all people from the rich and famous to the infamous and downtrodden. He was a proud conservative

democrat and personally knew the likes of LBJ, Speaker Sam Rayburn, Muhammad Ali, baseball great Mickey Mantle, war veteran Audie Murphy, Senator John F. Kennedy, Ted Williams, President Ronald Reagan, Texas Governor John Connally, Texas Governor William ''Bill'' P. Clements, Jr., Texas Governor Ann Richards, Texas Governor Rick Perry, Curtis Cokes, General Tommy Franks, Lieutenant General Tom Stafford, astronauts Gene Cernan, Buzz Aldrin, Neal Armstrong, U.S. Representative Ray Roberts, U.S. Senator Phil Gramm, famous aviator Claire Chennault, President George H.W. Bush, President George W. Bush, U.S. Senator JOHN CORNYN, U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen, T. Boone Pickens, H. Ross Perot, Red Adair, Bo Derek; Chuck Norris, Ted Williams, Tom Hanks and The Ink Spots. He works well with both Republicans and Democrats, but he ''got religion,'' in 2004, and became a Republican. Never forgetting his Democrat roots, he commented, ''Being a Democrat was more fun.''

RALPH HALL always has a story and a new, but often used joke. He runs 2 miles a day and certainly symbolizes the best of the Greatest Generation. RALPH HALL's service and leadership has shaped him into an important role model that members of the Texas Delegation in Congress, on both sides of the aisle admire. His dedication and love for his public service illustrates how success is attainable when mixed with hard work and determination, along with a love of America and of course, Texas.

And that's just the way it is.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, one word that will always be synonymous with RALPH HALL is 'gentleman.'

I met Congressman HALL when I was first elected to Congress in 1993 and was appointed to the Science, Space and Technology Committee where he served as Chairman at the time when he was a Democrat. As Chairman of the Committee, his bipartisan work there was marked by promotion of science, technology, engineering and math education; advancing American competitiveness through research and development of new technologies; and maintaining our country's preeminence in space.

I've never known Congressman HALL as a person who rests. His work as a policymaker will endure, and he is a natural politician with a knack for coalescing conflicting viewpoints.

Congressman HALL is also one of the kindest Members in Congress. His geniality helps make this institution a better place for the American people. And no matter who you are—astronaut, president, or next door neighbor—Congressman HALL is always one to put a generous hand forward.

I wish Congressman HALL every blessing together with his three sons and five beautiful grandchildren. I'm grateful to know him, to have served with him, and to call him my friend.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today we honor the distinguished service of our friend and colleague, RALPH HALL of Texas.

If there were a congressional ''Hall of Fame,'' Representative HALL would be a first ballot inductee. His many years of service were highlighted at the end of 2012 when he became the most senior member of Congress to ever cast a vote in the House of Representatives.

RALPH's career in the House of Representatives and his commitment to his constituents in the 4th District of Texas spans 34 years. But his contributions to our country began before that.

Since he was 19 years old, RALPH has led a life of service. As a lieutenant in the Navy during World War Two, he served as a pilot, and since then has never hesitated to accomplish a mission.

That mentality has made him a distinguished member of Congress, and a very effective Chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Throughout his tenure, RALPH has been a consistent advocate for scientific research and development.

As Science Committee Chairman he worked to ensure that business owners are not burdened by excessive EPA regulations.

RALPH has fostered programs to better understand extreme weather and to ensure that citizens are prepared for natural disasters.

He has worked to advance science education and programs that promote technological breakthroughs to benefit future generations.

And throughout his time in Congress, RALPH HALL has served this institution with style and humor.

RALPH HALL has always said, ''I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington.'' RALPH—you actually have achieved that rare combination of both. Thank you for your service to Congress, to the great state of Texas and to our country.

RALPH has asked me to pass along his comment, ''I am especially partial to my friends in the Texas Delegation who represent their districts so well and whose integrity and hard work have benefited not only our State but also our Nation. I thank you for your friendship and countless acts of kindness.''

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to thank our colleague, and my friend, RALPH HALL for his years of service in the House of Representatives. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. HALL for many years in the Science Committee, and I have always appreciated the way he has gone about his job. Mr. HALL has always been a public servant in the truest sense of the word. His lifetime of service began with his service in the navy as an aircraft carrier pilot during World War II. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mr. HALL and other members of the greatest generation for fighting to preserve the freedoms that we all hold dear. Once he left the armed services, Mr. HALL's service continued in the Texas state legislature before moving on to DC to begin his distinguished service in the House beginning in 1981.

As Science Committee Ranking Member and Chairman, Mr. HALL did a great deal to keep up the proud history we have in this country of support for science and space exploration. During Mr. HALL's tenure, the Committee passed the original America COMPETES Act in 2007 as well as its reauthorization in 2010. These landmark bills helped increase funding for science and education to help the US keep pace in an increasingly competitive world. Though we have not always agreed on every issue, I know that Mr. HALL cares greatly about the US scientific enterprise and the economic benefits it has provided our nation over the years. Those of us that know Mr. HALL know him best for his stories and the personable nature that he did business with. He will most certainly be missed in Congress.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, RALPH HALL has been a fervent and steadfast presence in Congress for almost thirty-five years.

Before coming to Washington, he served as a county judge and as a member of the Texas State Senate.

Before that he flew Hellcat fighters for the Navy during World War II; married the love of his life, Mary Ellen; and tells the story of working at his local pharmacy as a kid and selling a carton of cigarettes and a couple of bottles of Coke to the outlaws Bonnie and Clyde.

Congressman HALL has led an extraordinary and dynamic life, and he readily brought that energy to his work in Congress.

Serving with him on the Science Committee, and especially on the Space Subcommittee, has been a true honor. Congressman HALL has a deep respect for the basic science work done by NASA, especially that done aboard the International Space Station.

He has also been a firm champion of America's space exploration program—and it was in fact he who added the word ''Space'' back into the name of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology during the 112th Congress. As he has said many times, human space exploration is one of the best methods we have for engaging and inspiring the next generation.

I join my colleagues today in honoring RALPH HALL—who has inspired us all with his dedication to public service and to our nation.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN JOHN DINGELL ON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of our Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, 21 years ago, January of 1993, I was sworn into the 103rd Congress as the 28th Representative of the historic First Congressional District of Illinois.

One of the first Members of Congress to welcome me with the most heartwarming words and smile was none other than my friend from the great State of Michigan, Congressman JOHN DAVID DINGELL, JR.

JOHN DINGELL has trained me, worked with me, and inspired me far more than most other Members of this House. I can't think of any other Member in Congress who has spent the kind of time and energy teaching me the ropes than JOHN DINGELL.

JOHN DINGELL, Mr. Speaker, will go down in U.S. history as being one of the most powerful House committee chairmen of all times. That is why, Mr.