

Pottawattamie counties. Christine is a student at Farragut High School and is an active member of the Washington PEP 4–H and the Fremont County 4–H Council.

The purpose of the Region 17 4–H Youth leadership Council is to provide leadership development experience to 4–H and council members. The council works to identify needs, share ideas, and develop a plan of action to help assist the area within Region 17. It is because of leaders like Christine that the 4–H program is so successful in teaching its members valuable life skills that will prepare them for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Christine for being selected to represent 4–H youth throughout southwest Iowa. It is Iowans like Christine that make me proud to represent our great state. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Christine for this outstanding achievement and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

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#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, today, December 17, 2015, I was unable to vote on Roll Call 703.

If I had been present, I would have supported H.R. 2029, the tax extenders portion of the fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending legislation.

I would have voted in favor of this legislation because it includes the extension of critical tax provisions that would help millions of American workers, students, families, and businesses. Critically, the bill makes permanent three key refundable tax credits: the child tax credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the American Opportunity Tax Credit. Combined, these tax credits will help 24 million working families. Additionally, it includes an extension of the research and development tax credit, a vital component of Massachusetts's innovation economy.

However this bill is far from perfect, and I am disappointed that Congress has shunned its obligation to ensure these cuts are offset. I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues in the months ahead to enact comprehensive reform that focuses on job creation and the growth of our middle class.

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#### TRIBUTE TO EZRA SCHWARTZ

### HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to take a moment to remember Ezra Schwartz who, at only eighteen, was taken from us all too soon when he was killed just before the Thanksgiving holiday while volunteering in the West Bank. Ezra's grandparents, Mark and Heni Schwartz, have long been involved in New Haven's Jewish community and I am heartbroken for their loss.

Ezra was an extraordinary young man who had his whole life still ahead of him. Memories shared from those from every walk of his life shared a common theme—Ezra's kind heart, generous nature, and passion for making a difference. His vivacious character was contagious. He was dedicated to his family and his community, always striving to enrich the lives of others.

Ezra was an accomplished young man who loved teaching others. His father, Ari, recently recounted the many ways in which he helped his younger siblings as well as his time at New Hampshire's Camp Yavneh last summer, where he won an award for leading campers in the annual sing-off. Ezra's choice to join a yeshiva program, combining service with learning, did not surprise anyone who knew him.

Spending a "gap year" between high school and college studying at an Israeli yeshiva, Ezra was building a deeper connection to his ethnic and religious roots as well as volunteering his time to make a difference in the lives of others. His was a mission of compassion and humanitarianism and he was killed simply because he was Jewish.

Though we may never fully understand why Ezra was taken so soon, his family and friends can take comfort in the full life that he led while he was here. It is an honor and privilege for me to stand today to pay tribute to Ezra Schwartz and his extraordinary young life. I extend my deepest sympathies to his parents, Ari and Ruth; his siblings, Mollie, Hillel, Elon, and Avi; his grandparents, Mark and Heni; as well as his many family and friends at this most difficult time. Well known for his generosity and kind spirit, Ezra will be deeply missed by all of those fortunate enough to have known him and will serve as an inspiration to others to make a difference in this world.

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#### TRIBUTE TO LORI STONE

### HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside County, California are exceptional. Lori Stone will be retiring from the March Joint Powers Authority after a distinguished career that spanned over 20 years.

Lori began working with the March Joint Powers Authority (JPA) in 1994 after stepping forward to utilize her local knowledge of military base reuse. She has served as the Executive Director of the JPA since being promoted in 2006. In addition to the 365-acre airport, the JPA oversaw the development of the 1,200-acre Meridian Business Park and over 600 acres of land for future development. Lori described her early days with JPA as a "learn as you go" process because of the lack of precedent with local, state, and federal agencies. Over the years, Lori has forged relationships with the Air Force, Army, Federal Aviation Administration, Navy, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist in furthering the goals of the JPA, March Air Reserve Base, and the Inland Empire region.

Lori has amassed a large and impressive list of accomplishments while working as Ex-

ecutive Director of the JPA. She successfully advocated for the passage of federal legislation to authorize a land swap between the Army, Navy and JPA allowing for the redevelopment of an area of March Air Reserve Base to be more comprehensive. Lori helped expand the local foreign trade zone outside of the JPA boundaries to help enhance the region's economic tools. Additionally, Lori spearheaded the US Vets project, securing investments of over \$10 million and locating 7.5 acres for the project. The undertaking will serve more than 100 homeless veterans and their families.

In light of all that Lori has done for the Riverside County community and the March Joint Powers Authority, it is only fitting that she be honored for her many years of dedicated service. Lori's tireless passion for our military and public service has contributed immensely to the betterment of our community. I am proud to call her a fellow community member, American and friend. I add my voice to the many who will be congratulating Lori on the celebration of her retirement.

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#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,798,211,680,628.12. We've added \$8,171,334,631,715.04 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

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#### TRIBUTE TO CRAIG SACKETT

### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Craig Sackett, of Menlo, Iowa, for earning the American FFA Degree. Craig was recently awarded the degree at the National FFA Convention and Expo in Louisville, Kentucky on October 31st. Craig was a member of the Nodaway Valley FFA Organization and is the son of Jeff and Laurie Sackett.

The American FFA Degree is awarded to members who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to FFA and made significant accomplishments in their supervised agricultural experience. Craig had to meet certain requirements, such as studying agriculture for three years in high school, earning money in an agriculture field, investing that money into business, participating in community service, and displaying a record of outstanding leadership ability and community involvement. Craig spent four years in high school working towards this ultimate goal, and through his hard work and determination he was able to achieve it.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent leaders like Craig in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize him today. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Craig on receiving this degree and in wishing him nothing but continued success.

IN RECOGNITION AND HONOR OF THE "WORLD WAR II 70TH ANNIVERSARY AND CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY AND WORLD PEACE EVENT"

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize and honor the "World War II 70th Anniversary and Celebration of Diversity and World Peace Event." The ceremony, which took place on November 7, 2015, was a City of Houston Citizenship Month event that was organized by the Southern News Group and International Trade Center. It is estimated that approximately 25,000 people viewed the grand opening ceremony at Minute Maid Park.

The event sought to honor our veterans, mark the anniversary of World War II, and celebrate the diversity of Houston. Specifically, it aimed to convey the message that: "America means freedom like no other country on Earth." The ceremony also included the awarding of medals to World War II veterans in attendance, in honor of their courageous service, and the recognition of U.S. and Chinese pilots who fought in China during World War II for the Allies.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the "WWII 70th Anniversary and Celebration of Diversity and World Peace Event" wonderfully celebrated the vibrancy and diversity of the Houston community. Moreover, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all at the International Trade Center and the Southern News Group, under the leadership of its Chairman Wea Lee, for their hard work in producing this important event. I look forward to future enriching events and efforts.

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN M. HUDSON

**HON. PETER WELCH**

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the extraordinary public service of Susan M. Hudson, Clerk of the Vermont Public Service Board for 39 years.

Mr. Speaker, the Vermont Public Service Board is Vermont's utility regulatory commission, a quasi-judicial board that supervises Vermont's public utilities: electric, natural gas, telecommunications, and statewide energy efficiency. The Board regulates their rates, quality of service, siting, and financial management. It reviews the environmental and economic impacts of proposals to purchase energy supply or build new energy facilities—including conventional sources and a growing

number of renewable energy plants in an increasingly complex regulatory field. The process the Board administrators often requires public hearings, evidentiary hearings, and other forms of inquiry and investigation to ensure that high-quality service is provided by the utilities at rates that are just and reasonable. In short, the Vermont Public Service Board plays a crucial role in the lives of Vermonters. It is a role that it could not have hoped to play well without the sustained energy and focus that Sue Hudson has brought to so many facets of the Board's work.

Sue Hudson has had a remarkable and steady career at the Public Service Board. Her service has spanned the terms of six Vermont governors and 24 different Board members. She kept the wheels of regulation aligned and in good working order through major transitions in the utility industry and the Board structure. Through all of these changes, Sue Hudson remained the public face of the Board to countless citizens, developers, and utility personnel as they visited the Clerk's office to make filings, ask questions, and review documents. While many of the cases she processed were highly contested and involved significant public controversy, Sue Hudson's calm demeanor, fair disposition, and credibility as a Vermonter through and through have been a major asset to the Public Service Board in the performance of its responsibilities.

Sue Hudson is a longtime resident of Hardwick, Vermont, where she is a fully involved member of the community. Her husband, Dan Hudson, looks forward to spending more time with her. She has two wonderful daughters and two grandchildren. As busy as Sue Hudson has been helping Vermonters to navigate the regulatory process, she is also an avid and accomplished golfer and tennis player. And she has always found time to be very involved with her church community.

Through her professionalism and dedication, Sue Hudson has made a significant contribution to civic life in Vermont. On behalf of all Vermonters, I ask the House of Representatives to acknowledge Sue Hudson and her remarkable service to the people of the Green Mountain State.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SONAL SHAH

**HON. LEONARD LANCE**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mrs. Sonal Shah of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, who peacefully passed away in November after a courageous fight against Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Her life and advocacy were an inspiration. Undeterred by her diagnosis, Sonal lived every day to the fullest and her personal story was a profile in courage.

I was privileged to know Sonal through her work on raising awareness about ALS and her fight for a cure. She would come to Washington to have meetings on Capitol Hill where she would tell her story, share the latest research and inform policy makers of what she and the ALS community needed in funding for public research and to spur private investment. It was during that time I came to know

her wonderful family, including her husband and daughter, who have always been by her side.

Sonal worked tirelessly. She passionately made her case and I was proud to work with her on legislation that will make a positive difference in the lives of many. And that was what was so remarkable about Sonal's fight. Even the most groundbreaking of discoveries would likely have come too late to assist Sonal in her own struggle but she remained committed against the scourge of this disease so that others might have hope. She was a hero in the ALS community and the turnout of love and support at awareness events, at the celebration of her heartfelt book and at laps around the Somerset ball field demonstrated people were compelled by her story.

The fight against this terrible disease was made stronger by having Sonal lead it. She will be missed greatly. I know I will work in Washington with renewed vigor for this cause and will always remember Sonal's strength as we continue to work against ALS.

While we have lost a beloved wife, mother, writer, advocate and friend, let us remember her spirit and perseverance in our own personal struggles and let her determination forever be a source of strength for us all.

TRIBUTE TO TED AND JUDY KENKEL

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ted and Judy Kenkel of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the very special occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1955.

Ted and Judy's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Danny, Randy, Jan, and Kelly, their grandchildren, and their great-grandsons, Dominik and Declan, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Kenkel family that make me proud to represent our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 60th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

IN RECOGNITION OF STEVEN SPIELBERG IN RECEIVING THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

**HON. TED LIEU**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 17, 2015*

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent the hardworking, kind, and exceptionally creative people of California's 33rd District. I would like to recognize the brilliant work of one of my fantastic constituents: Steven Allan Spielberg, who was recently awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama.

His films are adored and cherished by billions around the world. With directorial, production and writing credits for incredible films