

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my vote was not recorded on rollcall No. 64 on H.R. 3036—9/11 Memorial Act. I am not recorded because I was absent due to the birth of my son in San Antonio, Texas. Had I been present, I would have voted “aye.”

COMBATTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, I visited Penn State University, which is located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, for a discussion on the effect that invasive species are having on forests across our Commonwealth. I was joined by several experts in the field of entomology—from the university and from Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Among the insects discussed were the spotted lanternfly, the gypsy moth, and the emerald ash borer. These experts discussed at length the challenges each species presents as well as the ongoing efforts to combat the devastating impact and spread.

As chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, I know that my State is not alone and that the effects of these pests are being felt all across the Nation.

I applaud the research being done at Penn State University and by foresters and entomologists around the Nation. Research and applying that science will go a long way in preventing these species from spreading further and causing more destruction on our forests.

I remain hopeful that we can all work together to ensure that our forests remain healthy, both ecologically and economically.

AMERICAN HEROES COLA ACT

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, the House passed H.R. 677, the American Heroes COLA Act, legislation I introduced with Dr. ABRAHAM from Louisiana. This legislation will ensure that veterans receive automatic cost-of-living increases annually based on the consumer price index.

Unlike with Social Security, Congress must act each year to provide veterans with the COLA increases they need and deserve. Now, by permanently adjusting benefits to include cost-of-living increases, we are providing critical peace of mind to those who have so heroically served our country.

Furthermore, this legislation includes two provisions to address the VA appeals problem, which currently has 440,000 claims backlogged. The first, authored by Congressman O'ROURKE, creates a fully developed ap-

peals pilot program. The second I introduced with Chairman MILLER to create a task force to examine the appeals process and make recommendations for improvements before the situation gets worse.

H.R. 677 and some of the other bills that we passed today take important steps towards ensuring that our veterans are able to get the benefits they have earned and deserve.

MARIA KELLER AND ZAKRIA GHANI RECEIVE YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARDS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Maria Keller of Plymouth and Zakria Ghani of Maple Grove for being recognized as Minnesota's top youth volunteers by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Maria, a sophomore at Orono High School, was awarded the top prize after setting up a program called “Read Indeed,” which has collected more than 1.7 million books and has provided them to underprivileged children. It is estimated that 800,000 students have received books from the organization.

Zakria, a senior at Al-Amal School, was a finalist for raising critical money for the victims of a devastating fire in Minneapolis. His efforts resulted in raising \$8,500 within one week after the fire in order to help the affected victims and residents.

Mr. Speaker, the work and service by these young people to serve and assist others should be inspiring to us all, and thanks to their actions, countless people have been helped. Their selflessness will serve them and their communities well in the future, and these accolades are well deserved.

Congratulations to Maria and Zakria.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

(Mr. FOSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor St. Elmo Brady. He was the first African American to obtain a Ph.D. degree in chemistry in the United States. He received a Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Illinois in 1916 for work done at the Noyes Laboratory. Dr. Brady was a pioneer in the teaching of science at both Tuskegee University and at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

His research included work on determining the structure of organic acids, methods of determining properties of alkaloids and infrared spectroscopy. This later research resulted in the formation of the Fisk Infrared Spectroscopy Research Laboratory and the Fisk Infrared Institute. In conjunction with faculty from the University of Illinois, Dr. Brady also established a summer program in infrared spectroscopy,

which was open to faculty from all colleges and universities.

Dr. Brady is just one of the many African American pioneering scientists whose work should be lifted up as the role model that it is, not just during Black History Month, but all year round.

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IMPORTANCE OF THE MOX FACILITY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today in the President's budget proposal, sadly, the President terminated funding to the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MOX) at the Savannah River site. I am disappointed the President has not acknowledged how crucial MOX is to environmental cleanup and promoting nonproliferation.

Support for MOX is bipartisan, as shown by former New Mexico Governor and Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, along with former Senator Richard Lugar. Both are experts who advocate the completion of the facility. Today, MOX is 70 percent completed, and there is no viable alternative for eliminating plutonium. What is more, closing MOX would make South Carolina and Georgia a permanent repository for nuclear waste.

MOX is also critical to upholding our nonproliferation agreement with the Russian Federation.

I am grateful for the leadership of Governor Nikki Haley along with Attorney General Alan Wilson, who have already filed a lawsuit against the Department of Energy to enforce the law for South Carolina's agreement with the Federal Government.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Thank you, Navy SEAL Rob O'Neill, for eliminating Osama bin Laden.

REHABILITATION RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT BILL

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the Senate HELP Committee passed by voice vote S. 800, the Enhancing the Stature and Visibility of Medical Rehabilitation Research at NIH Act.

As the lead sponsor of this legislation in the House of Representatives, with my good friend and colleague Congressman GREGG HARPER, I am very encouraged to see progress on efforts to advance the state of rehabilitation science at the National Institutes of Health and improve the care provided