

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

KEVIN "KEV" CAROTENUTO—PROSPECT PARK, PENNSYLVANIA

Kevin "Kev" Carotenuto was born on May 3, 1993. By the time Kevin got to middle school, he was a talented athlete and very involved in sports, however, school just didn't click for him. Kev started showing signs of ADHD very early on. His mother tried to get him an Individualized Education Program (IEP) but was denied, so she put him in counseling. Kev turned to drugs to cope with the stress of his struggles.

Kev was arrested shortly after his 18th birthday for robbery of three houses in his family's neighborhood. He didn't commit the crimes alone, but wouldn't snitch on his friends. He received an 18 month sentence in county prison and \$30,000 in restitution. Both Kevin's parents visited him and put money on his books the entire time he was in prison.

Six months after his release, Kev started using heroin. He was in and out of countless treatment facilities until he was sent back to jail in February of 2015. Kev was caught using heroin in a public bathroom and was arrested for violating probation. He was sentenced to seven months in county jail.

Kev was released the Monday before Thanksgiving to a local halfway house. He was put on blackout for seven days and then was allowed to go out for four hours at a time. Kevin worked for the newspaper union as an extra so he would call in daily for work. The Thursday after Thanksgiving Kevin was booked for an 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. shift.

Kev told the halfway house that he had work but proceeded to contact a cellie from jail who came to pick him up. When Kev arrived back at the halfway house he tested

hot for suboxone. He was kicked out immediately and the halfway house never notified his family. Kevin was on the streets for a week before he came clean with his mother.

Kev said it was time for him to be a man and he would get himself to rehab. He was approved for 26 days of treatment. Seven days before his release, Kev's mother requested a family meeting with his counselor. The counselor informed her that on Monday the aftercare specialist was going to have a conference call between Kev, herself and the counselor. Monday came and went and no call, so Kev's mother started leaving messages with the counselor. She called every day and left messages—no response.

January 7, 2016, came around and Kev said, "Ma, come get me, I got my coin." Off she went to pick him up. He came home so happy and ready to stay clean. He went to probation the next day where he asked the probation officer (PO) to see him twice a week to keep him honest, which the PO did for one week. The following week the PO told Kev he didn't have time to see him so often. The PO ordered Kev to complete IOP, so on January 8th he called and was told the first opening was 22 days away. Kevin went 22 days with no treatment except for NA meetings and a bible study group of men in recovery.

On the 29th of January Kev went to IOP for his evaluation and when he came out he said, "All good, my first session is on February 1st." On February 1st Kev's mother woke up and went into Kev's room and found him sitting on the side of the bed with his head in his hands and his hoodie on. She said his name two times and got no response. She then called 911. When she went to touch Kevin's shoulder, his stiff body fell to the floor. His mother saw the needle 1/2 full of clear liquid. She went to move his hoodie to get to his neck to check his pulse and all she saw was the side of his face—purple and cold. He was Dead. A mother's worst fear comes true.

Kev passed away on February 2, 2016, from an overdose of poisoned heroin.

JESSICA MARY MILLER—GLENSHAW, PENNSYLVANIA

Jessica Mary Miller died at the age of 31. Jessica struggled with addiction for 15 years and was also afflicted with severe mental illness.

Jessica died at the hands of her mentally ill boyfriend. She had been in the relationship for only five months and thought she found the "love" of her life. Jessica had been doing much better than she had been past, and her mother was hopeful she may be ready to overcome her struggles with addiction. But like many women who battle addiction, she desired a partner who would make her feel worthy and wanted. It didn't matter what they looked like, how old they were, or what they provided financially—she just needed assurance from a romantic relationship.

One night, after Jessica boyfriend's unemployment check came in, they got into a fight about how the money was going to be spent. Her mother only assumes this was the main argument from the phone call she got from Jessica that night. After they spoke on phone at approximately 10 p.m., the police were at Jessica's mother's door at 5 a.m. to tell her Jessica had been strangled and was found outside the steps of her apartment. At first, the police told her mother that Jessica

died by suicide but the boyfriend was later charged and convicted for murder by strangulation and is now serving 25 years in jail.

Jessica's mother is writing to show that not only drug overdoses are killing our children, but also the fall out of both drug use and mental instability. Not only girlfriends or spouses, but the innocent children who can't fend for themselves when their parents are so engulfed in their addiction.

It has been three years since Jessica's death and there isn't a day that goes by that her mother doesn't think of her. Many might find this strange, but her mother does not hate the person who took Jessica's life, as he is just as sick as Jessica was. They chose to be together and she knew what he was like, and chose to stay. A mentally healthy person would not put herself in that position. This was not Jessica's only bad romantic relationship, they were all bad, and her addiction drove her from one bad relationship to another.

KENT DAVID CHARLES EDWARDS—PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Kent Edwards, 18 years old, died of an accidental prescription drug overdose in 2003. One night during his sophomore year of high school, Kent called his mother to say that he was out with some friends and wasn't coming home that night. He was calling because he didn't want to worry his mother, but when they hung up she knew something was wrong. Kent's mother waited for him when he came home at 6:00 a.m.

Life changed for the Kent's family that morning. Kent went to the doctor and tested positive for substances. His family restricted and monitored Kent's activities. They made a lot of changes that next year and Kent adjusted fairly well. He transferred schools and graduated with ease. Kent got a job he loved and spent time with his friends and family. His family thought they had dodged the bullet—Kent didn't want to be addicted to drugs so they mistakenly thought they were in the clear. It seemed that all was well, but Kent's family didn't know any better.

Before Kent turned 18, he was scheduled to have his wisdom teeth removed. His mother filled the prescription before his surgery. As she was looking at the bottles, she noticed that one of them had fewer pills in it than the other. When she confronted Kent about it he admitted to having taken some.

She asked Kent why and his answer was chilling. He asked his mother to think about a time in her life when she had felt "Great"—"The Best." When she nodded Kent said, "The first time you get high, it's better than that. It feels so good that you want to feel that way again—only it's physically, chemically impossible." He explained how the drugs alter your brain chemistry and why people take more and increase their frequency of use in an attempt to get back to the feeling of that first high.

On a Monday in September, 2003, there was a knock on the Kent's family's door and soon they heard the words: "Your son has died."

Kent and two other kids crushed some Oxycontin and washed them down with beer. Kent got sleepy and the other two left. As Kent slept, the drug slowed his respiratory system down until it stopped completely. His roommate found him the next day—already gone.

CALEB SMYTHIA—LOUDON, TENNESSEE

Caleb Smythia, oldest of four, was his mother's biggest fan and the idol of his

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

brother and two sisters. Caleb was a great cook, loved all kinds of music and had a passion for playing the guitar. Music became so much a part of Caleb's life because he found it to be therapeutic.

Caleb's struggles began at age 16. He went through many rough patches and began abusing methamphetamine. When objects and money kept missing at home, his mother filed an unruly charge against him and Caleb became a child of the state. He spent over a year and a half in three different foster homes and one group home. Unfortunately, Caleb was never placed in a treatment facility, even though he relapsed and tested positive for five different drugs in his system.

When Caleb eventually went home, he seemed to have his life back on track. After graduating high school, Caleb had hopes of going to culinary school. However, within days after graduating, Caleb returned to his old friends who were abusing methamphetamine and pills.

Eventually, problems with Caleb were so bad that his mother told him he was no longer welcome in her home. One late night in the pouring rain, Caleb knocked on the door. His mother told Caleb she would take him to the ER or to a treatment facility but he couldn't come into the house. Even though Caleb was at such a low point and begged for help, the ER turned him away.

Another night Caleb arrived at his mother's door bloodied and broken. Caleb had been beaten and tortured for two hours by eight members of the local college baseball team. One of the players had given Caleb \$35 and asked him to get Percocet. Caleb was so deep in his addiction that he kept the money in order to get a fix. To retaliate, the team forced a mutual friend to trick Caleb into another drug deal. When Caleb went to meet the friend, he was abducted, thrown in the back of a truck, and held down by his throat. The baseball team drove Caleb to a field where he was kicked and stomped while curled in a fetal position. Caleb begged for his life and promised to pay them \$50 if they let him go. The next day, two of the boys came to Caleb's mother's house to get the money. One of them was holding the same baseball bat they had used to break Caleb's knee the night before. Three of the eight boys were charged and convicted of felony assault for which they received 10 years probation. Caleb refused to testify against his attackers in court because he felt like he deserved the beating.

The Caleb's family soon moved and everything seemed to be well again. However, Caleb's mother worked two jobs and didn't know that Caleb was getting into his grandmother's pain pills. Caleb went to live 200 miles away with his father. Unfortunately, Caleb wasn't kept safe—his father also had a substance abuse disorder. Caleb overdosed and died on Christmas morning of 2015, after being sold a black market pills that contained fentanyl.

MICHAEL "MIKE" JAMES TURNER—NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

So many people think "drunk" or "junkie" when they see someone suffering from addiction. What they can't see is a person that is stuck in a body they can no longer control.

Mike Turner suffered from addiction. He was also type I diabetic and had a Chiari malformation in his brain. He had a long history of alcohol and drug abuse and in the end, it was heroin that took him. Those were Mike's labels, but that is not who Mike was—the man he was, was an affectionate, exciting and hilarious dad, boyfriend, son, brother, and uncle. He had integrity, he was honest, and charitable. Mike participated in Chiari Malformation Cancer, Autism and Addiction events. He planned on going back to school to become an addiction counselor.

Mike acknowledged his issues and fought to better himself in the best way he knew how. Mike even went through a parenting course to try to be a better dad. He loved his kiddos—Mike Jr. and Amber—more than anything. He was all about his family and looked forward to weekly Sunday dinners at his mom's house.

Mike was a funny guy—pretty clumsy and always getting into mischief. He was so positive and encouraged everyone around him in their pursuits. Everyone who knew the real Mike loved him.

Mike had his demons, however, and he knew that overcoming his addiction was the most important thing. As long as he was using he was useless to his kids, his family, and his job. Mike knew the hurt his addiction caused others and that destroyed him. It devastated his family to witness his hurt and share his pain. Mike tried detoxing and treatment numerous times. He was part of a group called the SNAKES—Soldiers Needing Accountability Keeping Each Other Sober in Christ. In April 2016, he graduated from a program with 9 months clean.

On April 22, 2016, just three weeks after his graduation, Mike was living with his girlfriend, Theresa, again: He woke up with a start that morning and said he had low blood sugar. By 8:30 a.m., his sugar was up and he said he was feeling much better.

Mike's last message to Theresa was at 9:17 a.m.: "no worries im alive :cP." Theresa called him after her meeting around 10:30. He didn't answer so she called again . . . still no answer. She kept trying. Theresa had another meeting that ended around 11:45. She tried calling again and there was still no answer. Fearful that his sugar had dropped too low, she ran home. When Theresa got home around 12:30 p.m., she opened the door and found Mike.

Mike had relapsed after being 9 months clean. Theresa had no idea that he had been using. He overdosed some time between 9:17 and 10:30 that morning, on April 22, 2016. He was 33 years old.

NICHOLAS WADE BRANHAM—FREDERICK, MARYLAND

Nicholas Wade Branham passed away from a heroin overdose on July 15, 2016. He was 30 years old.

Nicholas was born on December 30, 1985. He struggled with addiction for several years, along with his girlfriend, who preceded him in death on January 16, 2011. It was her passing that helped him to get his life together and to get clean. Nicholas had been sober for almost five years; therefore, his passing was complete shock to me and utterly devastating. He was my son. He was my best friend. He was my everything.

Nicholas had a passion for tattoos and cooking. He was very sarcastic and funny—he always made me laugh. His family misses his laughter so much. Nicholas had such a kind heart. His mother loves to hear his friends tell stories of how Nicholas would prank them, but more importantly of how he would rescue them in a time of need or just be there for them if they needed someone to talk to.

"I really just don't understand any of this," writes his mother. "I hate that this is my son's legacy because he was so much more than that. Nicholas was a good person, a son, a grandson, a nephew, a cousin and a friend. He is so sorely missed. Rest in peace my dear sweet boy."

JOHN "BUBBA" CARTER—PELHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

John "Bubba" Carter died of a drug overdose on July 16, 2016.

Bubba was a sweet young man. He was always looking out for others and putting them above himself. Watching Bubba self-de-

struct was like a heart palpitation that just wouldn't quit. He was one of those people that you only get once in a lifetime; one of those people who changes your life the second they enter it. Their smile lights up your life, and it's something that never fails to make your day one hundred percent better. Bubba will always be that person for his sister—the person who could always make her day better just by being around. Bubba never knew how much he was loved and how many people cared about him. He grew up in a loving home with parents that never kept alcohol or prescription drugs around. His mother is a police officer, who sees the tragedy of what drugs do to families every day on the streets, and his father has been in recovery for 20 plus years; it just goes to show that drug addiction can happen to anyone.

Bubba started using drugs when he was 13 years old. First it was marijuana and alcohol, and soon after he was introduced to Adderall, Percocet, cocaine, and heroin. His drug addiction took over his life quickly. The times Bubba was strong enough to ask for help, he would. Bubba went to his first treatment facility when he was 15 years old, after he overdosed by mixing adderall and alcohol while at a party in town. "It was hard to see my mother struggling to get her son back from the drug monsters that controlled him," writes Bubba's sister.

Bubba attempted many times to live a life of sobriety. At 16 years old, he entered his second treatment facility, after having high levels of THC that put him into a drug-induced psychosis. After completing this program, Bubba attempted to attend AA and NA meeting regularly but the triggers that surrounding him were too strong. The stigma of drug addiction surrounded him everywhere he went. Bubba encountered people that would attack his sobriety by bringing up his past drug use. This made him feel as if no matter how hard he tried to stay clean he was still living in the shadows of his addiction.

On March 17, 2016, with the help of family and friends, Bubba entered his final detox and treatment facility. After three weeks, he left the facility and returned home. His family learned later on that Bubba maintained a full 30 days of sobriety on his own between March and April. He was very proud of himself. Bubba relapsed in May of 2016.

Two weeks prior to Bubba's death on June 30, 2016, his entire family, along with some of his friends, attempted an intervention. At the time Bubba was no longer living at home. Although his family kept in contact with him, they had decided to stop enabling him hoping he would choose recovery again. During this intervention the police were also involved and tried to help him, but because Bubba knew all the "right" words to say, their hands were tied. They then learned that Bubba had started using heroin intravenously.

On that same day but before the intervention, Bubba called his sister and ask to meet up to talk. She frequently recorded conversations with him hoping one day she could use them as a strategy to encourage him to stay clean. His sister immediately went to see him. When they met, Bubba spoke about his goals, and how he no longer wanted to live a life that made him feel unworthy to be loved. Bubba didn't want to cry anymore, didn't want to feel hungry because he spent all his money of drugs and didn't want to struggle. That's when his sister noticed the track marks on his arms. "My heart ached. My face drained in color and I started to shake. I didn't want to see my little brother hurting. Before I drove off, Bubba asked for a hug and said 'If I don't see you in two weeks, I want you to know I love you.' But I didn't know two weeks was going to come so soon."

Even though Bubba was suffering from addiction, it never stopped him from caring for and loving others; he was always putting people before himself. After his death, his family have had many strangers and friends contact them and told them stories about their interactions with him. Bubba always expressed to his family, that he was an outsider and did not have many friends, but they knew that was his addiction making him believe those lies. As his family saw from the outpour of support from extended family, friends and the community, Bubba was loved beyond measure. They got a letter from a neighbor that said Bubba helped her weed her yard because he saw her struggling to walk with her cane. She didn't know who he was until she saw his obituary in the paper. Another girl told them about how Bubba paid for her coffee in the drive thru and they became close friends and encouraged each other daily.

"Addiction is real," writes Bubba's sister. "It is affecting families everyday and making them question if they're going to see their loved ones ever again. It's time for us to unite and break the silence."

"I know that if my brother was here he would tell everyone struggling that it is okay to reach out for help, it doesn't make you weak. You need to associate with people who inspire you, people who challenge you to rise higher, people who make you better. Don't waste your valuable time with people who are not adding to your growth. Your destiny is too important."

"Our brothers and sisters are the first real relationships we have outside of our parents. Bubba was my brother—my first friend and the first person I learned to play with, share with, and laugh with. Bubba was the first person who picked on me, fought with me and taught me forgiveness. A life without him was never in sight. And I think that's the hardest thing to get over."

HONORING THE 90TH BIRTHDAY OF THOMAS H. BIRDSONG III

HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of Thomas H. Birdsong III, a great Virginia business leader.

Mr. Birdsong has a lifetime of leadership and commitment within the peanut commodities business. His company, Birdsong Peanut, is the largest company of its kind in the United States. Birdsong Peanut Company got its start in 1914 as a feed and seed store in Courtland, Virginia. In 1939 the founder of Planters Peanuts, asked the company to relocate near his factory in Suffolk, Virginia. That plant is still in operation today. Mr. Birdsong partners with farmers throughout the United States and sells to peanut product manufacturers around the world. His clients consist of companies such as Mars, Snickers, and Smuckers.

Thomas H. Birdsong III graduated from Randolph-Macon College in 1949, received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award from the college in 2009, and in 2013 received an honorary degree of law. He has also served as a philanthropic leader at Randolph Macon College. His commitment to quality and service has proven successful not only in the peanut business but also in community relationships both at home and around the globe.

I am honored to congratulate Mr. Birdsong on his 90th birthday celebration; I thank him

for the many lives that he has touched along the way. It is for these reasons that I join Mr. Birdsong's family and friends in wishing him a blessed 90th birthday and continued health and happiness in the years to come.

MITCH MORRISSEY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mitch Morrissey as he completes his tenure as the Denver District Attorney. I would also like to thank Mitch's wife, Maggie, for lending her husband to the Denver community for so many years. During his time in office, Mitch made it his mission to protect the public, advocate for victims of crime, and respect the rights of the accused. He worked tirelessly to promote stronger relations between law enforcement and the Denver community.

For 11 years, Mitch has been the chief prosecutor for the Second Judicial District. Prior to his election, he worked in the Denver District attorney's office for 20 years, 10 of which he served as the Chief Deputy D.A. In his role as D.A., Mitch was responsible for thousands of felony and misdemeanor prosecutions each year, supervising over 70 attorneys and 120 staff members, all while prioritizing victims' needs. Mitch led an invaluable team of Victim Advocates with a particular focus on those in under-served areas and communities. He is nationally known for his expertise in DNA technology, applying it in criminal prosecutions and working to ensure DNA science is admissible in our courtrooms. In addition, Mitch's relationship with and support for Colorado's law enforcement community has been exceptional. Thanks to his hard work, Mitch is also the recipient of numerous awards, including "Prosecutor of the Year," by the Colorado District Attorneys Council and the "Patriot Award," by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Mitch is also a true son of Colorado. He is a Denver native, a graduate of the University of Denver College of Law, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and Mullen High School.

I congratulate Mitch for his achievements. I applaud his dedication, leadership, and commitment to justice for Colorado's citizens. I am proud of the work he has accomplished and wish him all the success and happiness in the years to come.

APPLAUDING ERRICAL BRYANT FOR HER SERVICE TO ALA- BAMA'S FIRST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my deepest appreciation for my Director of Operations, Errical Bryant, for her years of service to Alabama's First Congressional District. Today marks Errical's final day serving the people of Southwest Alabama.

Like so many on Capitol Hill, Errical started out as an intern for Congressman Sonny Calhoun in 2000. After working for a period of time as a door attendant in the U.S. Senate, Errical returned to serving the First District as Constituent Services Director for Congressman Jo Bonner. She later added the responsibilities of Administrative Director and Scheduler. Errical served in this position for over ten years, until Congressman Bonner retired from Congress in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, I asked former Congressman Jo Bonner to share his appreciation for Errical. Congressman Bonner said, "Simply put, Errical is a wonderful human being—one of the finest people I know—and her many characteristics of honesty, hard work, dedication, and patriotic duty are the very qualities that will well serve America's next Attorney General. There are very few people in Alabama who have interacted with our office over the past 14 years who have not had the pleasure of working with Errical Bryant. In many ways, she has become the face of Alabama's First Congressional District in Washington and she has always made visitors feel extra special and at home, forever representing Congressman Byrne and me in the most professional manner humanly possible. While Errical's strengths are considerable, her talents are unlimited and her love of country is second to none."

When I was elected to Congress, one of the first pieces of advice I received from Congressman Bonner was to hire Errical. I distinctively remember my wife, Rebecca, and I meeting with her to discuss the position. During our meeting, Errical said "If you do everything I tell you to do, then you will be a really good Congressman." Having worked with Errical over the last three years, I can say there was a lot of truth to that statement.

As my Director of Operations, Errical handles everything from scheduling meetings to managing office finances to planning special events. She is a master of the little things and keeps the office running smoothly and effectively. Despite all the stress and pressure of a Congressional office, Errical keeps the train on the tracks and the schedule moving.

She has also helped countless people from Southwest Alabama arrange successful visits to our nation's capital. Upon their arrival to Washington, she has been a welcoming face ensuring southern hospitality remains ever present in our office. In addition to planning everyday visits, she has overseen ticket distribution for multiple presidential inaugurations and major gatherings.

Errical has arranged important visits to Southwest Alabama for other Members of Congress, cabinet officials, and foreign ambassadors. These visits were planned and executed perfectly, which helped leave a positive impression of our part of the country on both national and world leaders.

As our internship program coordinator, Errical has also helped mold and shape the next generation of leaders. She has instilled professionalism and confidence in countless young professionals that will serve them well in whatever career path they take.

In addition to all of her official duties and responsibilities, Errical has served as the office's unofficial party planner and executive chef. Displaying the same southern hospitality she shows to our constituents, Errical has organized countless celebrations for co-workers,

usually bringing in a classic “Pouncey Family” homemade cake or pie.

I asked some of her current and former colleagues for one word that describes Errical, and I think these hit home: dedicated, steady, diligent, passionate, ethical, motivated, funny, sunny, meticulous, loyal, accommodating, conscientious, and tenacious.

Mr. Speaker, Errical has been “the face” of Alabama’s First Congressional District for much of the last fifteen years, and her service will be missed. As she moves on to begin a new role, I want to wish her and her husband, Thurston, all the best.

So, on behalf of Alabama’s First Congressional District, I want to thank Errical for her years of hard work, commitment, and service to Southwest Alabama.

THE IMPACT OF THE REPEAL OF THE ACA

HON. ROBIN L. KELLY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD this article concerning the repeal of ACA.

[From the Washington Post]

REPEALING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT WILL KILL MORE THAN 43,000 PEOPLE ANNUALLY

(By David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler)

Now that President Trump is in the Oval Office, thousands of American lives that were previously protected by provisions of the Affordable Care Act are in danger. For more than 30 years, we have studied how death rates are affected by changes in health-care coverage, and we’re convinced that an ACA repeal could cause tens of thousands of deaths annually.

The story is in the data: The biggest and most definitive study of what happens to death rates when Medicaid coverage is expanded, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that for every 455 people who gained coverage across several states, one life was saved per year. Applying that figure to even a conservative estimate of 20 million losing coverage in the event of an ACA repeal yields an estimate of 43,956 deaths annually.

With Republicans’ efforts to destroy the ACA now underway, several commentators have expressed something akin to cautious optimism about the effect of a potential repeal. The Washington Post’s Glenn Kessler awarded Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) four Pinocchios for claiming that 36,000 people a year will die if the ACA is repealed; Brookings Institution fellow Henry Aaron, meanwhile, predicted that Republicans probably will salvage much of the ACA’s gains, and conservative writer Grover Norquist argued that the tax cuts associated with repeal would be a massive boon for the middle class.

But such optimism is overblown.

The first problem is that Republicans don’t have a clear replacement plan. Kessler, for instance, chides Sanders for assuming that repeal would leave many millions uninsured, because Kessler presumes that the Republicans would replace the ACA with reforms that preserve coverage. But while repeal seems highly likely (indeed, it’s already underway using a legislative vehicle that requires only 50 Senate votes), replacement (which would require 60 votes) is much less certain.

Moreover, even if a Republican replacement plan comes together, it’s likely to take a big backward step from the gains made by the ACA, covering fewer people with much skimpier plans.

Although Aaron has a rosy view of a likely Republican plan, much of what they—notably House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) and Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga.), who is Trump’s nominee to head the Department of Health and Human Services, which will be in charge of dismantling the ACA—have advocated in place of the ACA would hollow out the coverage of many who were unaffected by the law, harming them and probably raising their death rates. Abolishing minimum coverage standards for insurance policies would leave insurers and employers free to cut coverage for preventive and reproduction-related care. Allowing interstate insurance sales would cause a race to the bottom, with skimpy plans that emanate from lightly regulated states becoming the norm. Block granting Medicaid would leave poor patients at the mercy of state officials, many of whom have shown little concern for the health of the poor. A Medicare voucher program (with the value of the voucher tied to overall inflation rather than more rapid medical inflation) would worsen the coverage of millions of seniors, a problem that would be exacerbated by the proposed ban on full coverage under Medicare supplement policies. In other words, even if Republicans replace the ACA, the plans they’ve put on the table would have devastating consequences.

The frightening fact is that Sanders’s estimate that about 36,000 people will die if the ACA is repealed is consistent with well-respected studies. The Urban Institute’s estimate, for instance, predicts that 29.8 million (not just 20 million) will lose coverage if Republicans repeal the law using the budget reconciliation process. And that’s exactly what they’ve already begun to do, with no replacement plan in sight.

No one knows with any certainty what the Republicans will do, or how many will die as a result. But Sanders’s suggestion that 36,000 would die is certainly well within the ballpark of scientific consensus on the likely impact of repeal of the ACA, and the notion of certain replacement—and the hope that a GOP replacement would be a serviceable remedy—are each far from certain, and looking worse every day.

AFAQ SELECTED TO REPRESENT TEXAS AT THE CONGRESS OF FUTURE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LEADERS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Shaikh Afaq of Sugar Land, TX, for being chosen to represent Texas as a Delegate at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

Shaikh was nominated to this position because of her excellent academic record and desire to enter the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) field. Through this program she will be able to meet some of the most important leaders in the STEM industry, including Nobel Prize winners and top scientific university deans. The Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders is

hosted to help motivate the top students in the country to pursue their desired careers in the STEM fields.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Shaikh Afaq for being selected as a Delegate at the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders. We are extremely proud and expect great things from her in the future.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

CARLTON FREDRICK MESSINGER II—
HOLDERNESSE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

On Sunday, September 28, 2014, Carlton’s (Carl) family found out that he had been using heroin on and off for about a year. They were as shocked and bewildered as any parents could possibly be. They asked themselves: “How does a young adult who is a college graduate and taking advanced classes in chemistry and biology, getting A’s & B’s in the classes so he can apply to dental school use heroin?” His mother immediately thought that’s not my child, there has to be a mistake. How did we miss this? How does a functioning member of society who six months ago started a thriving eBay business selling vintage transformer toys use heroin? There were many questions swirling around in her head after being told about Carl’s heroin use. She felt, and still does feel, at times, that she is in a movie and this has not really happened to her family. She feels that Carl is out of town and will be coming back home someday. But then reality hits and she realizes Carl is never coming home.

Within minutes of being told about Carl using heroin, his family confronted him. After a lengthy, calm, and rational discussion, he confessed to using and that he was weaning himself off of it with Suboxone. Carl told his parents he wanted their help. The result of that meeting was an agreement: Carl would immediately enter a detox program, then enter a treatment facility.

After six phone calls and much frustration, his mother finally found a detox center that would take Carl. The reason for her frustration was not that there wasn’t a bed available or that they didn’t take their insurance;

the real frustration was his mother was told over and over again that if they didn't take over insurance, they could not accept him as a cash-only client. These specific detox centers had an agreement with insurance companies that they would accept approved insurance clients only.

Carl's mother finally found The Farnum Center in Manchester, NH, where Carl could enter as cash paying inpatient client if their insurance denied the request for coverage. As expected, their insurance denied the request to cover detox treatment for drug addiction. His mother was told that if Carl had an alcohol addiction it would be covered. She was also told that the insurance companies did not think you could die from drug detox.

Carl entered The Farnum Center detox program on Wednesday morning, October 1, 2014. At the end of the six-day inpatient program, everyone in the facility was convinced that Carl was going to make it. They made his family feel wonderful about their son; Carl had stopped using heroin on his own two months prior and was now detoxing off of suboxone. They also mentioned how Carl had helped other patients realize they could be treated for heroin addiction and have a better life. Before departing, the discharging doctor mentioned that if Carl was not ready to go right into rehab, he may be able to stay clean on his own since he had already stopped using heroin on his own and had previously used suboxone.

In another lengthy, calm, and rational discussion Carl made a case for not going to a treatment facility. Based on Carl's request, and the information his family received from the detox doctors, they ultimately agreed. After he successfully completed the detox program Carl moved home, and his parents felt they could monitor his progress adequately. They all agreed that he would have to stay clean and sober during this two-week trial period. At the end of the two weeks, Carl would be drug tested. If he tested positive he would enter treatment immediately. If at any time after the two week period Carl tested positive for drugs he would immediately go to treatment, no discussion. At the end of the two weeks, Carl took the drug test and passed with flying colors. His family congratulated him, and hugged him. They truly felt they had their son back and on the road to recovery.

On Tuesday, October 21, 2014, Carl came down with a bad upper respiratory infection and was taken to the doctor the next day. Carl's parents found out later that he never saw his regular doctor for this visit. He saw a doctor who was not familiar with Carl's medical history, and had no idea that he had just come out of detox for heroin addiction. They also discovered later that Carl's primary care doctor never wrote in his chart about his heroin addiction, and having just completed detox. Even though his primary care doctor was part of the process of getting Carl help.

Carl's parents found out after his death that the doctor never asked him if he had any alcohol or drug abuse issues before prescribing a codeine cough syrup for the infection. They learned that, five years before, the medical center had removed a template that would cue doctors to ask patients about substance use disorders prior to prescribing a narcotic. Carl's mother had a conversation with the CFO of this medical center, only to be told that, "Yeah, we don't do such a good job with this issue. Our clinicians need to be mindful of these issues."

When Carl's mother picked up the prescription for Carl, she was not aware that Cheratussin AC Syrup is a codeine cough syrup. There were no labels on the bottle stating that this cough medicine does in fact have codeine, and it can stimulate drug-

seeking behavior. However, buried on the second page of the patient prescription information sheet it lists the following: "Though very—unlikely abnormal, drug-seeking behavior is possible with this medication."

The codeine in the cough syrup triggered the need for Carl to use again. His mother found him dead in his bathroom, with the syringe still in his hand. The memory of finding him cold, dead and blue will be something she lives with every day. "This is an experience no parent should have to go through," writes Carl's mother.

"Carl died from fentanyl intoxication. There was no heroin in Carl's system, only fentanyl and codeine from the cough medicine. As my husband has said: this was the perfect storm. Unfortunately it took our son's life. Carl never had a chance to embrace sobriety. I feel some of the people we put our trust in failed Carl."

"Carl was an educated, smart, and vital young man who came from a family who loved him very much. He had his whole life ahead of him and is sorely missed by his parents, brother, family, friends and everyone that knew him. We know Carl is in a better place. Carl will always be in our hearts."

TYLER REED—POTEAU, OKLAHOMA

Tyler came into this world on January 27, 1992. Tyler was a natural fighter, independent and won the hearts of everyone he met. He excelled in all sports but was most passionate about baseball until ninth grade when he suddenly lost interest and quit playing. It was later learned that he had started experimenting with marijuana and alcohol and as a result, he started getting into trouble at school. As a single mother, Tyler's mom found herself at odds with a strong-willed boy who told her he just wanted "to have fun and not be tied down by responsibilities, those will come soon enough." By the time Tyler graduated high school in 2010, he was using marijuana and alcohol almost daily and experimented with K2, bath salts and Xanax.

Tyler had dreams of becoming a Texas Ranger, but he had gone too far into his head and couldn't see a way out. He had gotten in trouble with the law for underage drinking and possession of marijuana on several occasions. He finally got his head clear for a while and started working on the road to pay off his fines. Everything seemed to be falling into place, but his love for fun and adventure kept him searching for the next good time.

On many occasions Tyler woke up still wasted, wondering where his money went. In May 2015 he came to me once again and said he was tired of the life he was living. He asked his mother for help. Tyler longed to have a straight mind and clean life but he just couldn't seem to shake the addiction. Despite his desire to clean up, he refused to go to an inpatient facility. As a nurse his mother set an alternative plan of care in motion and he stayed clean and sober for 29 days, until one day he left and she didn't hear from him for weeks. When his mother put out a missing person alert he surfaced just to let her know he was OK; she knew he was using again.

They talked off and on for a month while he was staying with a woman known in town to be a meth user. When she was arrested in August 2015 Tyler came asking for a place to stay. His mother let him stay under the conditions that he would get a job and stay drug-free. He did for a while but quickly reverted back to his partying lifestyle. She struggled with him and the choices he was making. His mother didn't know how to handle it.

One of Tyler's friends was found dead in a field from an overdose of meth, and Tyler was questioned in his death. Tyler's inno-

cence was later proven, but that didn't curb the harassment he took from people that still believed he was guilty. That event shook Tyler and his mother thought he was on his way to being clean and sober. He seemed ready to conquer the world.

On February 6, 2016, Tyler went out with some people he thought he could trust. They drank and smoked pot and when Tyler passed out one of them shot him in the spine with a lethal dose of methamphetamines. Tyler was rushed into the hospital at 3:00 AM on February 7, 2016, with a core temperature of 108 degrees. The doctors didn't expect him to make it past the hour, but Tyler lived for 24 days in critical condition with severe multi-system organ failure. He was never able to speak a word again but he communicated with eye and hand movement. Drugs took his life away and his mother believes he realized that on March 2, 2016, when he tried to climb out of the hospital bed—it was as if he was saying, "I am out of here momma, I'm going home."

"Tyler lived a short 24 years," writes his mother. "He had so much more life to live. As I said before, Tyler was a fighter and very independent, he wasn't going to be taken care of for the rest of his life. He thought he had control over his addiction and that he wasn't hurting anyone but himself. But there are so many of us hurting because his life ended on March 3, 2016, when he stopped fighting and was set free from the pain. I hope and pray that sharing his story will help someone else who is struggling. I have to believe that his life was not cut short for nothing, that good things will rise out of this tragedy. Rest, my sweet Tyler, and save a place for me. I'll be home soon. Until then I will share your story with whoever will listen!"

ADAM SCHULTZ—SANDY, UTAH

Adam Schultz was an incredible person, who lost his life to an accidental heroin overdose on November 24, 2012, after 150 days of being clean. He struggled every day with a substance use disorder. Adam worked hard on his recovery through treatment, recovery support, and medication.

Adam was born December 19, 1989, and his family were lucky enough to bring him home on Christmas Eve. He was their 9 lb. 4 oz. big, baby boy. Adam was always smiling and happy. He learned to walk at a very young age and his motor was always running. His family often referred to him as the "Adam Bomb." At five years old he was diagnosed with ADHD and put on medication for hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Adam was gifted with his hands. He loved woodworking and became the handyman around the house. He was computer-literate and had received his A+ certification as a computer technician as well. He was regularly called by many with PC emergencies and were in need of troubleshooting or computer repairs. Adam never hesitated to help when asked. However, his true passion was working on cars. At age 13, he bought a 1966 mustang and decided to restore it himself and worked on it all through high school. He also loved his Mitsubishi Eclipse and always kept it in tip-top shape.

As a teen, Adam struggled with depression and it was difficult to find the right treatment. The doctors put him on multiple medications, which ended up causing seizures. He was then diagnosed with epilepsy and once the medication was adjusted the seizures stopped.

Despite all the diagnoses and medications, the one that had the biggest impact on Adam's life came in 2007, when he was 17 years old. Adam was diagnosed with degenerative disk disease and given a prescription for OxyContin. This dangerously addictive

medication quickly became a problem, and Adam was soon physically dependent, not just for pain but also to function in his daily life. This was where his addiction began.

In January 2008, at 18 years old, Adam checked himself into the hospital for being suicidal. He was then diagnosed with bipolar disorder and an addiction to opiates. He received counseling, started on bipolar meds, and was put on high doses of Suboxone to help with his addiction and also relieve his back pain. But six months later, after another night in the psych ward, he gave up on that medication and started using heroin.

"It is absolutely paralyzing to learn that your son has a substance use disorder," writes Adam's mother. "The stigma of having a child struggling with addiction caused us to withdraw rather than seek help. We learned how to live life with the truth hidden in the back of our hearts. We knew Adam was more than his addiction, and we desperately wanted our boy back."

Adam suffered and struggled for many years; finally, he found a medication that seemed to work for him. Adam received injections of Vivitrol for opioid addiction, and his life started getting back on track. After not using for 13 months, he relapsed and this time he started injecting heroin. After a six-month relapse, he set up an appointment to start receiving his Vivitrol shots again. In early November of that year, Adam was due for another injection. When he went in for his appointment, he managed to convince his doctor that he was ready to "try" one month without the shot. His entire life, Adam hated being on medication; whenever he started doing better, he insisted he didn't need it any more. So he stopped taking Vivitrol and scheduled an appointment for December to be re-evaluated.

Weeks later, Adam totaled his car on his way home from work. This was just too much and, after 150 days of not using heroin, Adam relapsed and lost his battle with addiction. Over 300 people attended his funeral. A woman Adam worked with told his family that just a few days before, Adam would have stopped to help someone fix a flat tire; this just goes to show you that people are more than their addictions.

ANDREW BENJAMIN SMITH—LAS VEGAS,
NEVADA

Margie Borth's world was forever changed on October 5, 2014, when her husband uttered those words: "I just received an email—Andrew is addicted to heroin." The news hit like a baseball bat between the eyes. Suddenly, all of the questions she'd been struggling with regarding her son were answered: Why so many car accidents? Why is he so distant? Why does he get mad and refuse to talk? Why doesn't he have any money?

Still I tried—I tried everything I could possibly think to do in such a desperate situation. I begged, sobbed, hugged, listened, scolded, yelled, pleaded—I mothered. I bargained with Andrew and with God.

But he was just visiting for the weekend and soon he had to get back to his job. Within two weeks, he was in the hospital with his first DUI and another wrecked car. He had overdosed on the streets of Las Vegas while driving. Thank god no one was hurt. He died just 21 days later, after spending a short stint in rehab.

When remembering Andrew, the first thing people talk about is his intellect. He was extremely bright; he thrived in accelerated programs and graduated from college in three short years. Many of his friends have said, "He was the smartest guy I've ever met." Then we remember his razor-sharp, witty, often self-effacing sense of humor. Andrew was also inquisitive, a good listener and a loyal friend. He was polite and people took to liking him immediately.

He was driven and it seemed as though he had the world at his fingertips. Andrew was confident about his opinions, view of the world and goals in life. He inspired many people during his short life. He was well loved by co-workers and a role-model for new employees at his new position in Las Vegas. His employer said they had so many plans for Andrew's future. She told me he always volunteered for extra projects, never complained and would have given the shirt off his back to someone in need.

Andrew began experimenting with drugs in high school, but his addiction to Oxycontin developed in 2009 while he was attending college in Florida during the Pill Mills—Oxy was cheap and readily available. Andrew often expressed his frustration with trying to find people on his intellectual level; Oxy made him feel more like everyone else. Oxy made people, life and college feel tolerable. Throughout the trajectory of his use, he thought he was in control. Even when he was forced to switch to heroin in 2014, he told a friend, "Heroin is not so bad, it's just like Oxy." In August 2014, he took a job promotion in Las Vegas and thought he could leave heroin behind: "Mom, I never planned to do heroin here," he said. "I planned to quit, but I realized I was an addict when I got to Las Vegas and still had to have it." Even at the very end, when his life really began to unravel, he still thought he had the upper hand on this drug. He refused long-term treatment and thought he could return to work after detox. I spend the last 6 days of his life with him, he was clean for 19 days before he overdosed. During that time, he told me what I wanted to hear, "I don't want to do heroin again, Mom." But he struggled; he was deeply sad and ashamed of what his life had become. On the surface, he was a successful corporate executive who appeared to have everything in check. He had great credit and a 401k. But in reality, he was a struggling addict who lived for Oxycontin and ultimately heroin—he was desperate to keep it a secret.

On a Monday afternoon, on November 10, 2014, Andrew handed me two red roses and said he wanted to go to an AA meeting. I was so excited that he was finally making progress and dropped him off at a meeting soon after. An hour later when he didn't respond to my texts or phone calls, I knew in my heart what had happened. The hospital called 45 minutes later. He was found in the bathroom of a Petsmart just down the street. It was too late to save him. He died alone.

I simply miss my son—he was my only boy and my youngest. Even though we lived in different cities, he was always present in my life except for the few times that he distanced himself due to his drug use. Even then, I knew I'd eventually get a phone call and a visit. I had hopes of grandchildren because he talked about becoming a father someday. He wanted to meet someone educated, maybe a doctor.

What I miss most is what could have been. He talked about wanting to move to the Pacific Northwest eventually, close to Portland, OR, where I live. I always thought he would join us. I miss his open-mindedness and intellect. His willingness to try new foods, adventures, places, his sense of humor. I miss our playful banter. I miss every phone call that ended in, "I Love You". Now there is just an enormous void in my life where he used to be. Sadness and tears are now a part of my everyday.

RON SLINGER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ron Slinger for being honored by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce with the Chairman's Choice Award.

The Chairman's Choice is selected annually by the Chairman of the Arvada Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to recognize a member of the community who has shown leadership and outstanding support to the Arvada Chamber.

Ron's extensive involvement, leadership and contributions in Arvada have resulted in a significant and long lasting impact in the community. His sense of humor and kindness bring positive energy and perspective to any opportunity he undertakes. Ron is a true advocate for the Arvada Chamber and has fully dedicated himself to the betterment of the community.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ron Slinger for this well-deserved honor from the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

SUPREME COURT NOMINEE NEIL
GORSUCH

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to President Trump's recent nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. I now call on my Senate colleagues to rigorously vet his nomination and ensure that his values and constitutional philosophies align with those of mainstream America. At this critical juncture in our nation's history, it is important that this nominee be a fair and impartial adjudicator of the laws that protect the rights of all Americans.

In the coming days and weeks, I look forward to learning more about the judicial opinions and constitutional philosophy of Judge Gorsuch. Unfortunately, Republicans did not extend this same courtesy to President Obama's nominee Merrick Garland. For 300 days, Senate Republicans defied the Constitution, ignoring President Obama's nominee, and refusing to even give him a hearing. However, I along with my Democratic colleagues value the Constitution over partisan politics.

Therefore, I hope for a fair and vigorous vetting process of Judge Gorsuch and his judicial record. The Supreme Court will likely make many critical decisions in the upcoming decades, affecting issues from voting rights to privacy rights to consumer protections. America needs a justice whose interpretation of the Constitution aligns with American values and the rule of law.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, due to other commitments, I missed the following roll call votes:

Roll call no. 66, I would have voted yes.

Roll call no. 67, I would have voted yes.

RECOGNITION OF SAM PROLER'S
100TH BIRTHDAY**HON. KEVIN BRADY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Sam Proler's 100th birthday. The world was a different place when Sam Proler was born a century ago. The oldest of nine children, Sam was born to Ben and Rose Proler during war times. Sam started working at the age of 13 and was later joined by his brothers. Through hard work, innovation and perseverance, the Proler's achieved the American Dream—Proler Steel Corp.

What would become the country's largest scrap metal recycling operation, Proler Steel Corp, NYSE (PS), started from a meeting between Sam Proler and Henry Ford. It was that meeting that led to an idea that there could be a better way to recycle used cars.

Through research and modifying mining machines, Sam Proler did what no one else had done before—he figured out how to melt entire vehicles in mere seconds. At that time, the recycling industry could not keep pace with the numbers of discarded cars each year. His invention was a game changer that helped reinvent the steel industry, and this led to the employment of hundreds of thousands of workers in the United States at more than 35 plants.

Because of Sam Proler, used cars and appliances gained new life as recycled steel. In fact, his patented process is known around the world as "Prolerized" scrap.

Sam Proler is one of America's original, innovative recyclers long before it was popular to be environmentally conscious. His innovation helped shape an American industry and protect our environment.

When you go to sell a used car for recycling, remember the name Sam Proler. Because of him, that car will be recycled into steel in a process that saves energy, conserves our nation's natural resources and protects our environment.

We know his lovely wife Marie, daughters Nina and Joyce, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are incredibly proud of what he has accomplished in his century. As we wish Sam Proler a Happy 100th Birthday, America also says thank you to one of our nation's innovative citizens.

IN RECOGNITION OF OTTO CON-
STRUCTION'S 70TH ANNIVER-
SARY**HON. DORIS O. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Otto Construction as they celebrate their 70th Anniversary. As the community and members of Otto Construction gather today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring them and their long history of service to the Sacramento region and beyond.

A three generation family-owned business, Otto Construction was founded in 1947 by John F. Otto. When he opened Otto Construction, it was with the core values of honesty, integrity, and compassion. He strived to provide the best service to their customers delivering quality projects while maintaining high standards at a competitive price. When John's son, Carl Otto, joined the family business in 1971, he brought his commitment to civic duty and community involvement to the organization which helped intertwine their business and the Sacramento community to create a larger footprint. Joining the company in 2000, Allison Otto represents the third generation. Allison's focus is in the marketing department, carrying the same commitment to our community as her grandfather and father.

Otto Construction has helped build the Sacramento community, not just with the projects they have done, such as historical renovations, building community centers and hospital buildings, but with the impact they have had throughout their charitable work. Otto Construction has partnered with the Society for the Blind, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, Eskaton Foundation and Sacramento SPCA, with many of their employees serving on the boards of nonprofits. A few notable projects include the Powerhouse Science Center, the California Lottery Headquarters, Bonney Field, the restoration of the Julia Morgan House, and Shriner's Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, as the family and members of Otto Construction celebrate their 70 years of service to the Sacramento region and beyond, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring them for their dedication to their community through their business practices and charitable work that have made them so successful throughout the years.

HONORING DR. CARTER G.
WOODSON**HON. EVAN H. JENKINS**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson and to celebrate his legacy with all of you at Marshall University. We are proud to call Dr. Woodson one of our own in Huntington, West Virginia, and to celebrate his work to honor and remember the achievements of African Americans. During Black History Month, it is only fitting that we stop to remark on the life of the Father of African-American History.

Dr. Woodson dedicated his life to educating others, becoming one of the first African Americans to earn a doctorate in history from Harvard University. He returned to his alma mater in Huntington, Douglas High School, where he became the principal and shaped the lives of countless West Virginians. He also documented the important contributions African Americans have made to our nation's history and ensured their accomplishments were not forgotten.

The Carter G. Woodson Lyceum at Marshall University will carry on his legacy and provide Black History Month events for the Marshall and Huntington communities. I wish you well as you celebrate the life of Dr. Woodson and the contributions of African Americans during the month of February.

HONORING JOHN ELINE OF
PENNSYLVANIA**HON. SCOTT PERRY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I honor my constituent, John Eline, on his upcoming retirement upon 10 years of service with Adams County Emergency Services, and for his ongoing commitment to his community.

Mr. Eline served as Adams County's Director of Emergency Services and provided calm leadership, professionalism and a strong work ethic to a wide range of challenges, including implementation of a new digital emergency radio system and preparations for the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 2013. Mr. Eline is also very active in our community, volunteering with the Gettysburg Fire Department, previously serving 12 years on Gettysburg's Borough Council and more than two decades with Gettysburg Hospital.

Mr. Eline's dedication has touched the lives of many people and challenged all with whom he served to be the best. His legacy of service to his community is admirable.

On behalf of Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, I commend and congratulate John Eline upon his retirement after many years of service to Adams County and our fellow citizens.

IN MEMORY OF TYRUS WONG

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of celebrated artist Tyrus Wong, of Sunland, California, who passed away on December 30, 2016, at the age of 106.

Tyrus Wong, best known for his beautiful, impressionistic renderings in the Walt Disney Studio's animated film "Bambi," was born as Wong Gen Yeo in China on October 25, 1910. He and his father emigrated to the United States in 1920.

Tyrus' father taught his son calligraphy, drawing and painting, encouraging Tyrus' artistic talents. Tyrus attended junior high school in Pasadena, but left that school to attend Otis Art Institute, now Otis College of Art and Design, on a full scholarship. At Otis, Mr. Wong

studied great western artists and Chinese brush paintings, especially Song dynasty landscapes that expressed mountains, trees and fog with nominal brush strokes. He graduated from Otis and joined the Depression-era Federal Art Project, creating paintings for government buildings and other institutions. During this time period he was a featured artist at an Art Institute of Chicago exhibition that included artists such as Pablo Picasso, and was active in organizing local art exhibitions for Los Angeles' Asian artists.

In 1937, Tyrus married Ruth Ng Kim, and after the birth of their first daughter, Kay in 1938, he began working for Disney as an "inbetweenner," where he worked on hundreds of Mickey Mouse sketches. After learning about Disney's film "Bambi," which was in pre-production, he created watercolors and drawings of a deer in a forest, and those tiny, evocative renderings became the basis for the film's visual style and he became the film's lead artist. In 1941, after a Disney animators' strike, Mr. Wong went to work at Warner Brothers Studios as a film production illustrator and sketch artist, where he drew set designs and storyboards for movies such as "Sands of Iwo Jima," "Rebel Without a Cause" and "Auntie Mame." Tyrus retired from Warner Bros. in 1968, but continued to work as an artist, creating greeting cards for Hallmark Cards, working as a ceramicist, and building and designing exquisite hand-made kites.

Mr. Wong's life and work has been featured in many significant exhibitions at The Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco and The Museum of Chinese in America in New York City and his striking Chinese Dragon mural is prominently displayed in Chinatown. Tyrus is featured in several documentaries, including the award-winning documentary "Tyrus," in which he shared his struggles with poverty, racism and adversity.

Mr. Wong is survived by his daughters: Kay Fong, Tai-Ling Wong, Kim Wong and two grandsons.

I would like to ask all Members to join me in remembering Tyrus Wong, a Disney Legend, whose innovative work inspired generations of animators, and who leaves a lasting legacy as one of the foremost artists in Los Angeles, California.

LA PATISSERIE FRANCAISE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud La Patisserie Francaise for being honored by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce as Business of the Year.

To be honored as the Business of the Year by the Arvada Chamber, businesses must have established a reputation for providing a superior level of customer service, using ingenuity and innovation to overcome challenges, and be an active participant and supporter of community activities.

La Patisserie Francaise is well known for their extraordinary leadership and heartfelt commitment to the city of Arvada. The owner, Sadie Russo, goes above and beyond in her commitment to the community through her do-

nations to local organizations as well as serving as an advocate for the City of Arvada.

I extend my deepest congratulations to La Patisserie Francaise for this well-deserved recognition by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

TO HONOR THE IMPERIAL COURT
DE FORT WORTH/ARLINGTON

HON. MARC A. VEASEY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington (ICFWA) in celebration of its 37 years of service to the LGBTQ community in the 33rd Congressional District of Texas.

In 1979, thirty founding members established the Fort Worth/Arlington chapter of the International Court System—one of the oldest and largest LGBTQ organizations in the world. ICFWA is a social-community service organization that sponsors fundraisers for charities in the community, advocates on behalf of the LGBTQ community, and provides a social support system for members of the LGBTQ community.

The ICFWA has given to a number of organizations throughout its decades of service to Fort Worth and Arlington. ICFWA fundraisers have benefitted the Samaritan House, Cancer Care Services, Health Services of North Texas, Meals on Wheels, and the Aids Outreach Center. Throughout 2015 and 2016, the ICFWA gave over \$21,000 to various causes and charities.

The LGBTQ community has experienced discrimination at their places of employment and in general society. Due to the work of LGBTQ advocacy groups, such as the ICFWA, progress has been made to ensure that Americans of any sexual orientation are not treated differently under the law, have equal access to healthcare services, and that their rights are well protected.

Members of the ICFWA have fiercely served the LGBTQ community by addressing the needs of those suffering from HIV/AIDS. The ICFWA helped form the Treehouse Commission, which is still active today, during the peak of the HIV/AIDS crisis to foster coordination among organizations aiding those affected by HIV/AIDS.

Several ICFWA members sat on the founding committee of the Samaritan House, a home for persons with HIV/AIDS, in 1991. When the local AIDS Outreach Center lost grant funding, the ICFWA took on the responsibility of funding the food pantry so that clients would not go hungry.

The ICFWA will honor the work of all of its members in March at its XXXVIII annual coronation in Fort Worth, Texas as the Court chooses a new Emperor and Empress.

I honor the Imperial Court de Fort Worth and Arlington's ceaseless support and fearless advocacy for the LGBTQ community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STREAM-
LINED AND IMPROVED METHODS
AT POLLING LOCATIONS AND
EARLY VOTING ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Streamlined and Improved Methods at Polling Locations and Early Voting Act, also known as the "SIMPLE" Voting Act for short. I introduced this bill earlier today.

This is a scary time for voting rights. We are witnessing an assault on voting rights the likes of which our nation has not seen since the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The President is alleging, without evidence, that there is widespread voter fraud in our country.

We know where this is heading. It is just the latest attempt to turn back the clock on voting rights since the Supreme Court overturned a key portion of the Voting Rights Act in 2013.

In the name of protecting Americans from supposed in-person voter fraud, a fraud that is virtually non-existent, States have been enacting voter ID laws. The real reason for these laws, however, has been anything but election integrity. It has been about partisan politics and discrimination.

But don't take my word for it. Take the words of legislators like the then-Pennsylvania House Majority Leader who boasted in 2012 that the state's newly enacted voter ID law would allow Mitt Romney to win his state. While speaking about his legislature's accomplishments, he said, "Voter ID, which is going to allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania: done."

Or take the more recent comments of a freshman Republican Wisconsin state representative last year who, while being interviewed about the 2016 election, said, "And now we have photo ID, and I think photo ID is going to make a little bit of a difference as well."

Or take the word of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit which said that new provisions of a voter ID law in North Carolina, "target African Americans with almost surgical precision[.]" According to the court, the law imposed cures for problems that did not exist, and "Thus the asserted justifications cannot and do not conceal the State's true motivation."

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. It is sacred. Yet, sadly, we have an ugly history in this nation of efforts to limit people's ability to access this constitutional right.

We need to make it easier for people to vote, not harder, and that is why I have introduced this bill today.

If enacted, the SIMPLE Voting Act would require states to allow early voting for federal elections for at least two weeks prior to election day, and to the greatest extent possible ensure that polling locations are within walking distance of a stop on a public transportation route.

It would also require that sufficient voting systems, poll workers and other election resources are provided, that wait times are fair and equitable for all voters across a state, and that no one be required to wait longer than one hour to cast a ballot at a polling place.

None of this should be controversial. This is all common sense, or at least should be, to those who want to help more Americans to vote.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING
EDDIE MANFORD BUFFALOE, SR.
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RE-
TIREMENT FROM LAW ENFORCE-
MENT

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor and recognize my constituent and friend, Officer Eddie Manford Buffalo, Sr. as he retires from seventeen years of honorable service as a courtroom bailiff for District and Superior Courts in Northampton County, North Carolina. The past seventeen years as a courtroom bailiff is but a part of a long and storied career in law enforcement that spanned more than half a century.

Officer Buffalo was born in Northampton County in Gumberry, North Carolina on June 3, 1931. He was one of ten children born to the former Geneva Brooks and Eddie Bruce Buffalo. He attended Northampton County Training School in Garysburg, North Carolina which was recognized as a "Christian Institution for Negro Youths of Both Sexes." Following graduation, on December 5, 1951 at age 20, Eddie Buffalo enlisted in the United States Army.

He served on active duty for two years before transferring to the Army Reserve where he served an additional five years. After nearly seven years of military service, Eddie received an Honorable Discharge and returned to his Northampton County home.

It was in 1961 that Eddie's law enforcement career commenced when he volunteered as a Special Deputy with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department where he worked the night shift. In 1965, Officer Buffalo became a full time Deputy Sheriff with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department. His love of law enforcement compelled him to learn everything he could about his work.

Officer Buffalo participated in and completed significant training at the Northampton County Law Enforcement Officers Training School, United States Treasury Department's Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms division; Roanoke-Chowan Training Center; and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In 1991 at the age of 70 and after sixteen years with the Northampton County Sheriff's Department, Officer Buffalo was appointed Chief of Police for the town of Rich Square. He honorably and faithfully protected the residents of Rich Square and led his department for eight years. During his service as Police Chief, in June of 1996, Chief Buffalo was tragically shot by a citizen during a domestic dispute but he recovered and continued serving the people of that community until his retirement in 1999. Always driven to serve others, he embarked on yet another career in public service by serving as a courtroom bailiff for District and Superior Courts in Northampton County.

From 1999 until 2016—17 years—Officer Eddie Buffalo kept the peace when court was

in session. He served as a bailiff under three different elected Sheriffs and is now ready to enjoy his hard earned retirement.

At every step along his storied life, Police Chief Eddie Buffalo, Sr. was accompanied by his wife the former Ruth Langford. The two were married on January 4, 1959 and just recently celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary. Together, they had three sons—Anthony, Deon, and Eddie Jr. who followed in his father's footsteps in law enforcement and now serves as Chief of Police in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, Chief Eddie Manford Buffalo, Sr. has dedicated his entire adult life to public service. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the dedication and selflessness displayed by Chief Buffalo over a more than 70 years first as a soldier, then as a volunteer Special Deputy, Deputy Sheriff, Police Chief, and finally as a courtroom bailiff. While Chief Buffalo is deserving of far greater accolades from a grateful public, my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in expressing our sincere appreciation for Chief Buffalo's hard work and sacrifice.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IM-
PACTED BY THE NATIONAL
OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

ZACHARY "ZACH" LEN—BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY

Zach was born on April 20, 1989. He grew up in the ice rink—he started skating at four and never stopped. Zach had a way about him, always smiling and laughing. He was always quiet and shy at first but once he was comfortable he would open up. When Zach went to college, he started to dabble with prescription pills. Zach did a great job hiding his addiction from the world. Eventually, it became clear that he had a problem, and that it was out of control. That is when the cycle of detox and enrollment in treatment centers began. This vicious cycle would take place every couple of months; Zach would be sober for some time, relapse, then start the cycle all over again.

Zach and his sister's relationship became very rocky during the three years prior to

his death. She could read Zach like a book and he knew that. When Zach would use he would stay as far away from his sister as possible and, when he was sober, it was like learning to love a new person. "I couldn't stand being around him when he was using," writes his sister. "He was nasty and argumentative. I would have done anything in my power to take this burden away from Zach, but he was the only one who had the power to change and overcome his struggles. And he tried. He tried so hard."

Zach touched many lives with his strength, determination, courage, and compassion. Zach was an amazing chef, and was able to make anyone laugh. He loved his friends more than anything else and would do anything for them. Everyone wanted the same thing for Zach: they wanted him to be happy and sober, but most of all they wanted Zach to stay alive. Zach was a free spirit and wasn't afraid to be who he was. He loved going to shows with his friends, and supporting their bands. He would even make them continue to jam when everyone else was done. Zach would dance this dorky silly dance, smile, and enjoy life. He never seemed to worry about what the next day would bring.

But things are not always as they seem. Zach was ashamed of his addiction; he kept it very private and very rarely would ask for help—he wanted to keep his closest friends out of that part of his life.

"It will be three years on January 28, 2017, and the pain doesn't seem to ever go away," writes his sister. "All of us—me, my parents, and Zach's friends are still learning to live this 'new normal' life, a life without Zach."

"On that cold Tuesday, we lost a son, a grandson, a brother, a nephew, a cousin, a best friend. I will never get to go to a New York Ranger game like we always talked about, or a Dave Matthews concert. So many things we had always talked about, that now I will experience by myself for the both of us."

"I'm so thankful for all the times we shared and all of the memories we made as kids and as adults. I will treasure them always. They are frozen in time in my mind. Images of Zach at happier times is the way I want to remember him. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and I couldn't agree more."

DANIEL AARON LUCEWICH—PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY

Daniel was considered the Golden Boy in his family. He had a high IQ and was loved by all of his teachers. Growing up, Daniel worked for his aunt and uncle at the family restaurant, Peter Pank; he was often referred to as the "Prince of the Pank."

Daniel cherished the holidays and everything they were about—especially how it brought his extended family together. During the holidays, Daniel would put up all the outdoor decorations—his family even won a place in our township's holiday decorating contests for several years. From the age of ten, Daniel was well known within his family for being extremely skilled at assembling anything; he could put things together without the instructions.

Daniel loved surfing. He and his friends would surf off the inlet near Point Pleasant. He also enjoyed bowling and golfing with his uncle and hanging with his cousins playing cards. However, Daniel's most passionate hobby was buying cars and fixing them up.

Daniel was always there for his friends. He was the person they called when they needed a hand moving, painting an apartment, or even changing a flat tire at three in the morning. Daniel truly had a heart of gold. He lit up a room just by walking into one. Daniel loved his two sisters Fallon and Katie and his older brother Christopher.

His entire family loves and misses him dearly.

ALEXANDER "ALEX" JOSEPH MARKS—
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA

The final death certificate from the Orange County Coroner arrived in the Marks family mailbox: "Cause of death: acute heroin intoxication." On February 6th, 2013, Alex's father found their 19-year-old son, Alexander Joseph Marks, dead in his bedroom at their home in Huntington Beach, California. His family found a needle and heroin on Alex's desk. They couldn't believe that Alex had turned to heroin and were devastated to learn this was the way their son had died.

As you can imagine, the Marks family are having a difficult time. The wound is so deep, so raw; they thought he had overcome his addiction. Alex was working over college break before he was to go back to school to become an electrician. Externally, it looked like he was doing well, but now his family understands that internally, he was sick with the disease of addiction. There was no note . . . Alex's family learned later that he had accidentally overdosed because after so many months of being clean, his tolerance was low.

During elementary and junior high school Alex was bullied. He had two rare medical conditions; Osteochondromatosis (a rare bone disease) and Von Willebrand (a blood clotting disease), in addition to mental health issues. At a young age, he had experiences that no kid should; many surgeries after which he was prescribed pain medications, countless doctor visits, and home health care nurses who administered IV medication. He was diagnosed with ADHD around the 5th grade.

Alex's Grandma died during his freshman year of high school. She had been the rock in his life and he had a hard time living without her. He began self-medicating with pot and alcohol to cover his grief, which eventually led to him using pills and other drugs. Meanwhile, he was having a rough time trying to fit in socially and many of his friends were also using drugs. Alex was not involved in school activities, no matter how many times his family encouraged him.

When his addiction progressed, Alex was admitted to the University of California, Irvine as well as Loma Linda Medical Center psychiatric hospital. Upon release, he attended a local treatment program and was expected to return to high school after 30 days. His family sought help from many medical professionals and was diagnosed with depression and bipolar disorder. When nothing seemed to be helping, Alex was sent to Heritage Residential Treatment Center in Provo, Utah, where he spent 8 months in a dual diagnosis treatment center. He came home and graduated high school but within a few months he was hanging out with old friends and local's he'd met in treatment. In December 2011, at the age of 18, Alex was arrested and charged with a felony for receiving stolen property with the intent to sell. He was sent to jail for 7 months.

Alex followed the path of many before him; he was stealing for drug money—opioids. He ended up with 3 years' probation with the stipulation that if he completed all that was required, the felony would be removed from his record. These tough learning experiences made him realize that he never wanted to go back to jail. He wanted his freedom—he wanted his life back.

On July 5, 2012, Alex was released from jail at 3 a.m. (without guidance or supervision—something his family will never understand). Although he was overwhelmed by the court fees and classes he had to take, Alex was determined to succeed. Once again he was a joy to be around and his family believed that the

worst was over. He started an electrician training program at Long Beach City College and never missed a day the entire semester.

On Tuesday, February 5, 2013, two young adults came to the house; his family believes Alex may have met these "friends" at his court ordered drug classes. They also believed Alex purchased heroin that day, from these "friends". Alex returned home from meeting with his probation officer around 7:30 p.m., had some soup, watched the Lakers game with his dad, said "Goodnight, I love you," and then went to his room. At approximately 5:30 a.m. on February 6, 2013, his father found Alex dead in his room. The coroner report stated he had died around midnight.

"I'm sure this story is all too similar to many you've heard or read before from other families who have been through this nightmare," writes Alex's mother. "These past 4½ years have been the most difficult of our lives."

"One of the most frustrating parts of this journey, was how hard it was to get good help for Alex. I prayed each and every day for God to shine his light upon my son; to bring the right people into his life. He needed someone other than his parents to help him but this did not happen."

"As you can imagine, writing this is very difficult, but we must not stay silent. We must speak out in order to make the changes that are needed both for mental health and addiction treatment in this country."

SEAN McLARTY—AUSTELL, GEORGIA

Sean McLarty was born on July 11, 1980, in Lithia Springs, Georgia. Growing up, he was a very happy and loving child and he carried those qualities into adulthood. Sean was always an absolute joy to be around. He had a knack for making people smile; the room would light up whenever he entered. He had two children, Caleb and Mina, who were the loves of his life.

Sean always had an aspiration for acting and went on to be featured in several films and TV shows. He had a small role in one of Tyler Perry's House of Payne episodes; played a mute crook in a movie called Three Rookies; was in the youtube series Fighting Angels; and had roles in various short films. Sean was also exceptional at repairing computers and electronics—if it was broken, he could fix it.

Prior to his unexpected death, Sean wanted to start an organization that he would name "Families Against Drugs," to help families affected by addiction, and let them know they are not alone in this fight. He had a huge vision for this organization. However, Sean could not seem to help himself.

On March 28, 2011, Sean was found dead in a motel room just south of Atlanta, Georgia. The autopsy report determined the cause of death to be from the toxic effects of Methamphetamine. However, even the police officer in charge of his case, didn't believe there was enough meth in Sean's system to cause death.

After speaking to someone close to him, Sean's family found out that he had been in possession of a drug called 1,4-Butanediol, which is comparable to the drug "gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid" (GHB); and acts as a stimulant and aphrodisiac, enhancing euphoria. This drug is what is believed to have killed Sean. 1,4-Butanediol is odorless, colorless, and extremely difficult to detect in toxicology screening.

Sean was never a regular drug user, he used more casually. When Sean died from an overdose, it seemed unreal that it would happen to someone like him, with so much potential and life left to live.

AMBER MERSING—PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA

"Thinking about Amber's story and how to share it with 144aDay was difficult," writes

Amber's Uncle Lou. "I am sure you all understand the emotions involved in putting this together. As I thought, I recalled Amber's funeral service in Pittsburgh, PA. Her grandfather and her cousin (my daughter) both spoke wonderful words during the service and I felt this would be the best way to share Amber's story."

"Below is what my daughter Gianna (12 years old) wrote. She stood and delivered this to everyone at Amber's funeral service. Savannah (Gianna's sister/Amber's cousin) stood up at the podium to read a scripture with her Aunt Nina (Amber's Mom). I am so proud of all of them."

Hello,

Amber was like a sister to me. We had so much fun together from gymnastics competitions to dancing. I loved her so much. I loved how we were close cousins. And I will always remember all the fun we had. I am gonna miss her alot. I want for everyone in this room to remember that she is looking down at us. One more thing—in heaven she is with Blaze. She used to dress up with him and get their picture taken.

Amber's grandfather delivered a beautiful eulogy after Gianna spoke, here is what he said:

Where do I begin? I feel like a bird with a broken wing. God only allowed us to have Amber for a short period of time but during that time she touched many lives and left us with a lot of memories. To me, she was both a child and a grandchild; the two could never be separated. She brought the joy of a grandchild and the anxiety of a child all at one time. Amber came into my life as a toddler and those good memories will remain with me forever.

I thank God for putting Amber in my life and I am thankful that I got to see her grow from a helpless little girl into a beautiful young lady. Amber was a big part of my life for the last twenty plus years. I was blessed to have known her for most of her time on Earth. I'm sure that Amber has left all of you with a lot of good memories and I hope that you share those memories with me and with each other some time.

Amber liked being the center of attention when she was in her comfort zone, but would hide when that comfort zone began to collapse. She dreamed of singing in front of a large audience when it was just a couple of us. But when the couple of us became a few of us, she would go into hibernation. She was both shy and outgoing and could switch from one to the other and back again in the blink of an eye.

Her creativity was endless. She and Grandma could turn scraps of anything into works of art. Amber had an interest in everything from acrobatics to woodworking and all things in between. Amber gave me those hand-made treasures with such pride and I still have many of them.

Amber also had that gentle side. She seldom raised her voice and was uncomfortable when others did so in anger. She was a caretaker at heart, which showed when she worked at Norbert's. Amber was the oldest of our grandkids, so she loved playing with and helping her younger cousins. She learned patience from her Grandma and passed some of that on to me. I loved those hugs when we parted company.

Amber could light up any room she entered even as she struggled with depression—she so wanted to be happy. She handled the depression in the best way that she could. I watched her go through those ups and downs so many times. When she thought she had a plan to regain control of her life, she would get slapped down again and would not be capable of following through with her plan. After seeing Amber's struggle, I thanked God that I have never personally experienced

those ups and downs. I also thank God that it is not my place to judge her if she felt that she was doing her best. Jesus said, "Judge not, and you will not be judged, condemn not, and you will not be condemned, forgive, and you will be forgiven." (Luke 6:37) Because one's behavior toward others often ends up being paid back in kind—and sometimes even to a greater degree—Jesus continued to urge His disciples to be tolerant. In particular, Jesus prohibits condemning others and commends forgiveness.

I remember Amber as that little girl who would run and jump on my lap in happiness and run to me when she was afraid. There were the play-in-the-dirt clothes and pretty girl dresses; dance lessons, softball games, and taekwondo; pierced ears, nose, lip, etc; curly hair, braided hair, and straight hair; tennis shoes and high heels; Disney movies and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*; school and church; and so on and so on and so on. Pick any of them or add your own. Some of them I didn't like at the time but I'm going to miss every single one. I have a lot of memories and no one can take them away. Amber has been immortalized in my heart and those memories will remain. I'm sure all of you have fond memories of Amber that you will hold on to.

Amber believed in God and I believe that Jesus has welcomed her into Heaven where she will spend eternity. Amber no longer has to deal with the pain associated with mortality. I have faith that I will see her again and that she will be there to welcome me into eternity. I will miss her dearly but I can now think of her as an angel that is looking over me and she will look out for me when I need help. I love you Amber and I always will.

TRENTON MUNN—IONIA, MICHIGAN

Trenton Munn, died August 21, 2016, from an accidental heroin overdose. He was 31 years old.

Trenton suffered from drug addiction since his late teen years. He fast became addicted to Oxycontin, and when that became hard to come by, he turned to heroin. It was a cheaper, easier to find alternative.

When his son, Harley was born in May 2012, Trenton tried to quit cold turkey. He wanted to get clean for his son. Trenton also suffered from anxiety and depression. During the past four years Trenton tried repeatedly to get off heroin.

This past March his family discovered that Trenton had advanced to shooting up heroin. Even though he had said he would not stick a needle in his veins.

After many failed attempts in treatment, with everyone telling us we had to do tough love, we decided to remove Trenton from our home. It broke his family's hearts having to put their child out on the streets.

Trenton was then taken in by a friend. The friend promised he didn't condone heroin and there'd be none of it in his home.

Throughout this past summer, Trenton would come to his family's home for his parental visits with his son. Since his son's mother had gotten in trouble with the law, Trenton was given full custody of Harley. Trenton also had just began a new job, was looking healthier and had gained some weight. His family thought he was kicking his addiction. Things were looking up.

Due to Trenton not having a car, his parents were driving him to and from work. The last day they saw their son was Saturday, August 20, 2016. They picked him up from work at 4:00 p.m., as usual. Nothing really seemed out of the ordinary, other than Trenton not asking what his mother was making for supper. He normally would come have dinner with his family.

When his parents arrived at the friend's house where Trenton was living, he told

them he'd see them in the morning and that he loved them. He didn't text or call them that evening.

The dreaded call came at 4:21 a.m. from the friend Trenton was living with. The friend began with: "I think you need to come out here!" Trenton's mother asked him what was wrong and he replied, "I think Trent's overdosing!" His mother hung up the phone immediately, jumped out of bed screaming. They got into their car and drove as fast as they could.

They arrived at the friend's home in a matter of minutes. The police and the ambulance were already there. They were met by an officer on the porch of the house. It was too late. Trenton was dead.

The authorities believe Trenton received what they call a "hot load": heroin laced with fentanyl.

That same weekend, over 75 overdoses were reported in Ohio. The heroin was laced with elephant tranquilizers.

"This has been the worse pain we ever felt," writes Trenton's mother. "Nothing or no one can ever bring our son back. Our grandson is going to grow up without his father."

JEFFERSON CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud the Jefferson Center for Mental Health for being honored by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce as the Non-Profit of the Year.

To be honored as the Non-Profit of the Year by the Arvada Chamber, a non-profit must show how they support Arvada through their programs, services and involvement. These non-profits are known for their ingenuity and innovation to overcome challenges as well as their active and effective work with the local business community.

The Jefferson Center for Mental Health is one of these non-profits. As a community mental health center that looks to inspire hope and improve the lives of the members of their community, their incredible work and innovative approach has helped to serve those in our community who often have nowhere else to turn. In addition to receiving this recognition, Jefferson Center for Mental Health has also been named a Top Workplace for four straight years by the Denver Post.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Jefferson Center for Mental Health for this well-deserved recognition by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKEY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I rise today to celebrate Black History Month and its 2017 theme—The Crisis in Black Education. This year's theme reflects on the crucial role of education in the

past, present, and future of the African American community. As Americans, we come together to commend the many educators, writers, and mentors who have worked so diligently to improve educational opportunities for African American students throughout the country, but we must acknowledge that there is still much more progress to be made.

Throughout American history, the unfortunate reality is that there have been racial barriers to equal education. The crisis in black education began during the era of slavery when it was against the law for slaves to learn how to read and write. Before the Civil War, free blacks in northern cities had to walk long distances to attend the one school regulated solely for African American students, while this limitation did not exist for white children. By 1910, segregation was established throughout the south. African American schools were of lower quality and received less government funding per student than in white schools. During the Civil Rights Movement, significant steps toward positive change were made, including the Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which outlawed segregated school facilities for black and white students at the state level. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended state and local laws requiring segregation.

Today, many African American youth remain exposed to public school systems where resources are limited, overcrowding occurs, and a glaring racial achievement gap is evident, especially in urban areas. As Americans, we must continue to work together to resolve the crisis in black education as it is, without a doubt, one of the most critical issues facing our communities.

This month and always, it is important that we honor and celebrate America's greatest advocates for equal rights and civil liberties. Along with this month's theme, we honor those who have fought for equal educational opportunities for African Americans, including Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Cornell West, Maxine Smith, Carlotta Walls LaNier, Joe Lewis Clark, Fannie Jackson Coppin, and Alexander Crummell, among many others. As we pay tribute to these heroes of American history, let us remember their profound perseverance, sacrifice, and struggle in the fight for freedom and equality, and the remarkable impact their contributions have had in shaping our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating Black History Month and honoring those who fought, and continue to fight, for civil rights and justice. We honor the African American educators, scholars, and supporters of educational equality, who have played such a critical role in changing the landscape of American society for the better. As we reflect on the state of black education, let us never forget the struggle of our predecessors while remembering that there is still much work to be done.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF WIN AND POLLY BELANGER

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize Win and Polly Belanger

of Willsboro, New York, for their consistent and enduring dedication to community service.

After retiring from the United States Air Force in 1988, Win Belanger moved to Willsboro, New York, with his wife Polly, where they have worked for the betterment of their community by lending both their ears and their voice.

By urging individuals in Essex County to become more involved in their government and enter into public service, the Belangers have helped to encourage authentic and sincere representation. Additionally, Win has shown a steadfast commitment to the wellbeing of his peers through his work on the Willsboro Central School budget committee, the town zoning board and as a founding member and officer of the Willsboro Community Housing Assistance Task Force.

On behalf of Essex County, I would like to thank Win and Polly for their service, their patriotism and their friendship, while also wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

**MEGAN VILLANUEVA SELECTED
TO REPRESENT TEXAS AT CON-
GRESS OF FUTURE MEDICAL
LEADERS**

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Megan Villanueva of Katy, TX, for being chosen to represent Texas as a Delegate at the Congress of Future Medical Leaders by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists.

The Congress of Future of Medical Leaders is an honors program for high school students who plan to become physicians or go into medical research fields. Students must be nominated by their teachers, have a minimum 3.5 GPA, proven desire to enter the medical field, and inspire and motivate their peers. Multi-talented Megan has also received awards and has been acknowledged for her artistic skills. In junior high school, she also won the gold medal at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo School Art Program competition.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Megan Villanueva for being selected to represent Texas at the Congress of Future Medical Leaders. We wish her luck and look forward to seeing her future success in the medical field.

**RECOGNIZING DIANA FOOD'S IN-
VESTMENT IN BANKS COUNTY,
GEORGIA**

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the exciting economic investment Diana Food, a global provider of natural ingredients to the food and beverage industries, has made in Banks County, Georgia. Georgia has previously been recognized

as one of the best states for business, and Diana Food's decision to establish a facility in Northeast Georgia is a testament to the strong workforce and economic promise that Georgia provides.

Diana Food provides innovative, sustainable ingredients for the food industry, and the company's new \$50 million facility will provide more than 80 new jobs to the heart of the Ninth District of Georgia, invigorating the local economy and showcasing Georgia as a premier state in which to do business. I grew up and raised a family just a county line over from Banks County, and can attest to the vigor of the local economy; Diana Food made the right choice. This decision is a win for Banks County, for the state of Georgia, and, most importantly, for the people who call our corner of the Peach State home.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Banks County on its economic drive and Diana Food on their decision to expand operations to Georgia. I am looking forward to seeing the positive community impact this investment will have on Banks County, Northeast Georgia, and the future of Georgia business.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN H. RUTHERFORD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and I missed the following roll call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

YEA on Roll Call 36
NAY on Roll Call 37
NAY on Roll Call 38
NAY on Roll Call 39
NAY on Roll Call 40
NAY on Roll Call 41
NAY on Roll Call 42
NAY on Roll Call 43
NAY on Roll Call 44
YEA on Roll Call 45
NAY on Roll Call 46
NAY on Roll Call 47
NAY on Roll Call 48
NAY on Roll Call 49
NAY on Roll Call 50
YEA on Roll Call 51
NAY on Roll Call 52
NAY on Roll Call 53
YEA on Roll Call 54
YEA on Roll Call 55
YEA on Roll Call 56
NAY on Roll Call 57
YEA on Roll Call 58
YEA on Roll Call 59

**AWARDING THE CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL TO HUMANITARIAN
AND SPORTING LEGEND MUHAM-
MAD ALI**

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, as we begin Black History Month, I am proud to reintroduce legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammad Ali in recognition of his contributions to our nation. I believe it is long past time to recognize an American civil rights activist and sporting legend with Congress' highest honor. Unfortunately, Congress failed to act before The Champ's death last summer, at the age 74, so I ask my colleagues to join me now in honoring an American hero. Over the course of his illustrious career, Muhammad Ali produced some of our nation's most lasting sports memories. From winning a Gold Medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics, to lighting the Olympic torch at the 1996 Summer Olympics, his influence as an athlete and a humanitarian spanned over fifty years.

Despite having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the 1980s, Ali devoted his life to charitable organizations. Ali, and his wife Lonnie, were founding directors of the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center and Movement Disorders Clinic in Phoenix, AZ and helped raise over \$50 million for Parkinson's research. In addition to helping families cope with illness, Ali led efforts to provide meals for the hungry and helped countless organizations such as the Make-A-Wish-Foundation and the Special Olympics.

Muhammad Ali's humanitarian efforts went beyond his charitable activities in the United States. In 1990 Muhammad Ali traveled to the Middle East to seek the release of American and British hostages that were being held as human shields in the first Gulf War. After his intervention, 15 hostages were freed. Thanks to his devotion to diplomatic causes and racial harmony, Ali was the recipient of many accolades, including being chosen as a "U.N. Messenger of Peace" in 1998 and receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005 from President Bush.

Through his unyielding dedication to his sport and to struggling populations around the world, Muhammad Ali still serves an example of service and self-sacrifice for generations of Americans. The Congressional Gold Medal is a fitting commemoration of his life and work, for which he is deservedly known as "the Greatest."

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing one of our nation's most lasting and influential figures by signing on to this important legislation.

**RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IM-
PACTED BY THE NATIONAL
OPIOID EPIDEMIC**

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the Record the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories

with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

VICTOR BENJAMIN SURMA—BRIDGEVILLE,
PENNSYLVANIA

Victor Benjamin Surma was born July 20, 1983. He died on January 26, 2014 from a heroin overdose. Victor was an excellent athlete. At the age of 15 he fractured his spine playing football. The orthopedic surgeon prescribed oxycodone. Prior to being prescribed a narcotic, Victor did not drink or use drugs. Victor was a fly fisherman, outdoorsman, excellent mogul skier. He was a good student and he had a bright future. Victor played football at a Division I college. His third year, he quit the team.

Victor struggled with substance abuse. His parents were unaware that prescription drugs would be highly addictive because of the history of drug and alcohol abuse in both of their families. Education and prevention, especially for families with genetic predisposition to abuse is essential knowledge, beginning at the earliest age for children.

Victor had a dual major in college in business and communications. He was a successful campaign model during and after college, and an orthopedic sales representative for Smith and Nephew. Victor was awarded "Rookie" of the year in sales nationwide. To maintain his ability to work, Victor would drive an hour after a 10 hour day of working in the hospital to find a doctor who would give him suboxone. The effort to obtain suboxone daily exhausted Victor physically and mentally. He could only work with the daily dose of suboxone, but could not function without having a doctor closer to his home. No one could.

Victor could not stop using prescription drugs. He fought like a soldier to stop the urges to use drugs. Victor also was unformed in thinking he was weak and was shamed because of his drug habit.

Victor went to Caron Rehab, Gateway Rehab, Wonderland Rehab, two rehab facilities in Florida, Mountainside Rehab, and the last rehab was associated with Harvard Medical Center. Admittance to emergency room care when he voluntarily required life saving intervention was denied. His parents accompanied Victor to Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The blood test indicated so many drugs in Victor's system that he qualified for admittance. However, there were not enough beds. They left not knowing what to do and Victor continued using.

Victor got two DUI's and lost his license for two years within a week of being denied admittance to Mercy Hospital. He lost his lucrative job, all his accumulated money in bank accounts, his two cars, and became so desperate and ashamed he went into a downward spiral. Isolation from friends, family, and society was heart-wrenching.

Once his source of income was depleted, Victor started using heroin. At this point he qualified for methadone. His parents would drive Victor to the methadone clinic, and it was at the clinic where he made the acquaintance of a drug dealer. Victor was aware of the seriousness of drug dealing and would not participate. However, Victor had fallen so low that his parents paid a huge amount of money for him to go to a Harvard affiliated drug program.

Victor was clean for 6 months prior to his overdose. He humbled himself to work in re-

tail, walk to work, and his parents were his only social life. At the Harvard affiliated rehab, Victor obtained a sponsor and the doctor advised Victor's parents to support his move to an apartment in New York City.

When Victor died, he was alone. The autopsy indicated a small amount of heroin and cocaine, but because he had not been using for 6 months it hit him like a freight train. The NYPD discovered his sponsor was a drug dealer from Long Island, NY. The phone records indicate the sponsor called Victor at 3 a.m. the morning of his overdose.

After his death, the community did not know what to say to his family. It was horrible for them not to have support even in light of Victor's death. Addiction was perceived as a weakness, poor parenting, not as a disease.

Victor's parents hope is to give support to other parents and families who are isolated and have a loved one suffering from substance abuse disorder. Insurance companies must step up and cover treatment. Treatment needs to be more than 28 days. If Victor's parents had known that he may have had a chance to live with this disease with the help of extended rehab, they would have done anything possible to facilitate Victor's recovery. His family looks at Victor's death as a wasted, tragic loss of a loving, intelligent, compassionate, and vital person for this world.

Victor's family misses him every second of every day. Losing a child to drug overdose is another stab in their hearts as support and compassion recognizing addiction as a disease is nil. Only through legislation, education and insurance participation can we as a society stop this fatal disease.

KELSEY SUZANNE VAUDREUIL—WELLINGTON,
FLORIDA

Kelsey Suzanne was born August 25, 1991, in West Palm Beach, Florida, but lived most of her life in her hometown of Wellington. Growing up, Kelsey was a sweet, soft spoken child who made friends easily. She had two brothers, Korey and Austin, whom she loved with all of her heart. In Kelsey's pre-teen years she loved the baton and was very involved with a discipleship group from church, which strengthened her faith and wisdom in God.

At age 16, Kelsey began working at a small town movie theatre in Wellington—sadly, that is where her opiate use began. From there on, Kelsey then graduated from smoking opiates to using heroin. For seven years, off and on, Kelsey was in and out of detox clinics, treatment centers, residential facilities, hospitals, and halfway houses. Kelsey's mother was her biggest cheerleader; she loved, encouraged, and begged her to stop using and to try again. No matter how Kelsey felt her mother kept pushing her with God's love and her own.

There was probably around seven or eight times her mother allowed Kelsey to live at home, but only if she promised she'd stay clean and not use. This privilege would end if she used drugs. Sadly, after a short stint at home, Kelsey started using again. Her mother unfortunately had to ask her to leave—how that killed her to have her child leave without knowing where or who she would go to but the boundaries had to be put in place.

Kelsey had lost her father in March of 2011, which broke both her and her brothers' hearts. Kelsey's mother believe this intensified her drug use. Even though Kelsey said she was okay, she always had that big beautiful smile of hers that covered so much pain. Kelsey also miscarried her son, Mason, at four months along. This was devastating for her; the shame and guilt she carried was overwhelming.

In 2012, Kelsey was almost a year sober and living in an all-girls halfway house. There

she built strong sober relationships and learned to manage her life and her addictions. She was working a full time job at a café, which she really enjoyed and the customers loved her. Her mother was so very proud and happy for her. Kelsey later left the halfway house and moved into an apartment with a friend, only to end three short months later after relapsing.

On December 17, 2014, at 6:10 a.m., Kelsey's mother received a knock on my door from a policeman, who handed her a small piece of paper and told her to call the Lantana Police Department. She truly thought to herself, "Oh, Kelsey must have gotten into trouble." The detective on the other end of the phone said, "Ma'am I'm sorry to tell you your daughter, Kelsey Suzanne Vaudreuil is deceased." Kelsey passed away in a motel room—how that broke her mother's heart. She'll never know what truly happened that night, but the autopsy report said it was a multiple intoxication, accidental overdose. Kelsey's little frame just couldn't handle anymore poison but in God's great Mercy, he took her home at 2:50 a.m. in that small motel room.

"Drug use has plagued my family for years," writes Kelsey's mother. "Kelsey's passing has changed mine, my family's, and friend's lives forever. It's a loss that I can never truly find the right words to express other than to say it's a void in my heart that cannot be filled."

"Addiction is a horrible disease and drugs don't care anything about you. If you are in active drug use, please reach out! Don't isolate yourself; there's no shame. Remember, YOU ARE LOVED!"

JUSTIN WOLFE—PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA

Justin was intelligent, kind, thoughtful, loving, caring and loved life to the fullest. However, Justin's story is similar to most who have an addiction, and that is he began drinking at 15 and eventually moved on to other substances, which was learned while he was in college. Justin in his younger years played soccer, ice hockey, street hockey, lacrosse and did karate. He attended Drexel and Syracuse Universities, respectively, but mid-year was dismissed from each due to aberrant behavior. Justin saw therapists as a result of his aberrant behavior and drinking since he was 15 years old. However, they thought it was his anxiety, OCD and behavior, not realizing he had a hidden addiction. His dream was to complete college and become a successful businessman. However, the punishments, reprimands and good parenting did not halt Justin's behavior of what we later learned was a deep seated addiction.

In April of 2012, Justin approached his mother and admitted that he was addicted to Percocet and Oxycontin. She took him to their family physician and during the appointment, Justin asked the doctor not to tell me about his issues, claiming that the news would "kill me." The physician told his mother to take Justin to a crisis center immediately for treatment, but Justin convinced her, without the doctor's knowledge, to take him to a suboxone doctor that he had found instead.

Two months later his father was finally informed, against Justin's wishes, about his addiction to Percocets. He demanded that Justin go to an inpatient rehab but he said as a 21 year old he could make his own decision; he didn't want to go to an inpatient facility for fear of being exposed to more dangerous drugs, such as heroin and crack cocaine. Unbeknownst to us, he had been using heroin for quite some time at that point. Eventually, he agreed to participate in an outpatient treatment program for the summer and began weekly psychiatric visits.

While he was in the program Justin's father contacted the intake director to inquire about his progress. He was informed that they could not disclose any information under HIPAA regulations. The following September Justin attended Temple University as a sophomore and joined a wonderful fraternity AEPI. He continued to see a psychiatrist and things seemed to be going well, which made his passing on December 19th, 2012, all the more shocking to his family.

Justin's father explained Justin's history of substance abuse to the psychiatrist who tried to counsel him and monitor his prescriptions for depression, anxiety, and OCD. After Justin passed away his father learned that he hadn't disclosed his heroin addiction—except to say that he had tried it once.

Throughout Justin's time in college, he made friends who had also been in and out rehab, including one boy who was attending pharmacy school, a local judge's son who worked for a Governor, and an attorney's son. These examples demonstrate how addiction is indiscriminate—its devastation reaches all ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. When his family found out that Justin had passed away from an overdose of heroin, the entire family was shocked. Only upon further investigation did his father learn that heroin is rampant in our communities—killing our children and destroying the lives of their families.

"We, as a society, need to advance education in schools at every grade level regarding the dangers of abusing opiates and the slim recovery rates of those who become addicted," writes Justin's father.

"It seems as though no one speaks about their family's struggle with addiction due to embarrassment or shame. However, within two months of my son's death, I spoke to well over 25 parents who came forward with stories similar to mine—several stints of rehab—only to lose their child to an overdose. Many families I have spoken to could no longer afford the high costs of treatment; their insurance would only cover a limited period of rehabilitation."

Justin was not violent and would never intentionally hurt a soul, but his addiction hurt and endangered the lives of those close to him, including his younger brother. I thank God that Justin never hurt anyone on the road. I have pictures of his apartment that demonstrate how he was living at college; there were cigarette burns on his bedding from all of the times he nodded out.

No one could save Justin—not his family, friends, nor Justin himself, but it is his father's hope that with much needed change, Justin's tragedy and his advocacy can help to save millions of young lives. Since Justin's passing, his father has spoken to close to a thousand parents and children regarding opiate and heroin abuse in order to bring awareness, education and prevention amongst our communities. If there is one pertinent fact that he can bring to the forefront, that is for every parent to have a Power of Attorney, a Medical Directive for their 18 year old so they are made aware of their symptoms, medical condition and are apprised of every step throughout their young adult's care.

BRADLEY MICHAEL ZULICK—BUTLER,
PENNSYLVANIA

Bradley Michael Zulick was born August 21, 1986, in Butler, Pennsylvania. As a child, he always made his family laugh and brought joy and laughter to everyone lucky enough to know him. His friends and family describe him as funny, thoughtful, and a polite young man. He was loving, kind-hearted and was a spirit lifter, with a contagious personality and smile. Brad was also a fantastic athlete, a great friend, and everyone's best

friend. He was truly one of a kind. Brad loved everyone, and everyone loved him. His family meant the world to him. Brad also enjoyed spending time with his friends' children.

Throughout Brad's short life, one of his biggest interests was sports—whether he was participating or simply watching, he was always engaged. In high school, he excelled at football, basketball, and track, and also enjoyed playing golf. Even when he was older he still participated in small-sided football games, church basketball leagues, dek hockey, and baseball games. No one knew more about sports than Brad, which helped him to become an outstanding sports trivia player.

Every year Brad played in the Lyndora Turkey Bowl, a neighborhood football game held on Thanksgiving Day, where the younger guys played against the older generation. Brad enjoyed these games so much. He also was a passionate supporter of Pitt Panther football and regularly attended games with his dad, sister, cousins, and friends. Pitt games are precious memories of times spent with Brad.

Brad loved music; going to concerts with his close friends was what he looked forward to more than anything. In school, history was Brad's favorite subject. He studied history at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and went on to receive his associate's degree from Butler County Community College on May 19, 2009. We were all so proud of him for this accomplishment. It seemed Brad's life would be everything he dreamed it could be. We all were so hopeful that he would have a bright future.

However, around the time Brad graduated from college, he became addicted to prescription pills. "I knew there was a problem," writes his mother. "But because I was naive, I didn't know exactly what was wrong. Brad was becoming moody and depressed—the total opposite of the laid-back young man he always was in the past."

In January of 2014, Brad admitted his addiction to prescription pills and asked for help. It was believed he was using heroin at that time, but he didn't admit it. His mother's heart broke as she watched Brad sobbing because of the shame and guilt he felt from his addiction. He told her he was lost. His family tried so hard to help him. Brad went into treatment three times. He always believed he could overcome his struggles with addiction but his mother never truly understood how hard it really was for him.

The saddest day of her life was March 17, 2016—the day Brad lost his battle with addiction. He passed away from an overdose of heroin laced with Fentanyl. Brad's parents lost their baby, their only son that day. Their daughter, Kelly, lost her only sibling and best friend. They all are struggling with the grief of such a huge loss.

ETHAN CLEWELL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ethan Clewell for being honored by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce with the Behind the Scenes Award.

The Behind the Scenes Award recipient is selected by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce staff to recognize an individual who has gone above and beyond to support the efforts of the Arvada Chamber.

Ethan Clewell is the epitome of an unsung hero. He works tirelessly behind-the-scenes to

help ensure the success of many community and chamber events. In addition, Ethan dedicates his time and has helped make significant contributions to Leadership Arvada and Arvada Young Professionals. The Arvada Chamber team can always count on Ethan to go above and beyond.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ethan Clewell for this well-deserved honor from the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON
902 CONSULTATIONS

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO
SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to memorialize the Report to the President on 902 Consultations and in so doing recognize the vitality of the Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America.

The Covenant is the fundamental agreement that brought the Marianas into this nation. It was approved by 79 percent of island voters in a 1975 plebiscite and by the U.S. Congress in U.S. Public Law 94-241 the following year. President Ronald Reagan brought the Covenant into full force and effect in 1986, pursuant to his Proclamation 5564.

The Covenant lays out in detail the nature and conditions of the relationship between the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States. There is recognition embedded in this agreement, however, that matters may arise periodically affecting the relationship, and the Covenant provides a mechanism for their examination. Section 902 requires that the President of the United States and the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will appoint special representatives at least every ten years to meet and consider these matters and then make a report and recommendations regarding them.

In January of this year, special representatives of the President and the Commonwealth, having met pursuant to Section 902, issued their Report to the President. Today, I include in the RECORD a web address to that report, so that it will be available to all Members of Congress and to the public at large, and so that the work and recommendations of all involved in producing this document will be memorialized and widely accessible. The address is:

<http://sablan.house.gov/sites/sablan.house.gov/files/documents/902%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

25 YEAR AND GOING STRONG:
KSBJ AND TIM McDERMOTT

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, since 1999, Houstonians wake up each Sunday and get ready for church. They get in their cars and tune into 89.3 KSBj and start their mornings with Tim McDermott on his show "Enter His

Gates." The show features some of Houston's favorite praise and worship artists. I can't think of a better way to start a Sunday than lifting up God.

For the past 25 years, Tim McDermott has worked to bring followers of Jesus Christ together. Serving as KSBJ President and General Manager since 1992, he is the longest running general manager at any major Houston radio station. It is the mark of a good manager when an organization shows growth, and that's exactly what KSBJ has done. In 1992, when Tim started, the station had only 11 employees and drew around 45,000 listeners each month. Today, the station has close to 100 employees and draws over 800,000 listeners from not just Houston, but all over the west coast.

It is often said that if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life. The same could be said for Tim. He says he's never considered his role at KSBJ a job. Instead, he considers it a passion and a calling. The station's core value system promotes a passion for Christ, a love for people, a servant's heart and the belief that we are better together.

Under Tim's leadership, KSBJ has received various recognitions in the radio broadcast industry, including National Religious Broadcaster's Radio Station of the Year, Christian Music Broadcaster's Station of the Year and Best Christian Workplace. Not only does time strive to make KSBJ an outstanding Christian radio station, he also mentors other radio stations both around the U.S. and internationally.

Congratulations to Tim McDermott and KSBJ on 25 years of service to Houston Communities.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING MR. SCOTT C. GRAVES

HON. TED S. YOHO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work, commitment, and character of Scott C. Graves, House Agriculture Committee staff director. Scott is my kind of man—intelligent, understanding, and a straight shooter. His rise from an intern on the House Agriculture Committee to the committee's staff director over 10 years speaks to his strong work ethic. Raised on a cattle ranch in Texas, his commitment to rural America is unquestioned—a view shared on both sides of the aisle. His work as a steadfast advisor to Chairman CONAWAY solidified his role as a leader who is both fair and firm.

But it's Scott's character that I notice most. As a member of the Agriculture Committee for the past 4 years, I have had the privilege to witness that character as he balances not just the demands of committee members, staff, and interest groups; but of a growing family. Scott, thank you for your guidance, your example, and your friendship. I wish both Scott and his lovely wife Haley all the success in the world as they turn the page onto a new chapter in their lives.

RECOGNIZING SCOTT CHESTER GRAVES

HON. AUSTIN SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Scott Graves, Staff Director of the House Committee on Agriculture. After 10 years of dedicated service to agriculture policy on Capitol Hill, Scott is leaving his position on the Committee at the end of this month.

As Staff Director of the House Committee on Agriculture, Scott has helped develop a strategic vision for the Committee and its forty-five Members that has directly shaped American agriculture policy. Working directly alongside Chairman MIKE CONAWAY, Scott has also dedicated himself to working for the best interests of all members of the agriculture community.

Having worked with Scott personally, I have seen firsthand the level of expertise and commitment that has made him an invaluable asset to the Committee. His hard work has benefited not only the staff he works with daily, but the Members on both sides of the aisle that he has loyally served.

In today's age, it is a rarity to find the combination of character, ability, and professionalism that Scott exemplifies. On behalf of the House Committee on Agriculture, I would like to thank Scott for his service and wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

OPPOSING THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong opposition to the President's unjust and un-American executive order that blindly bars individuals from entering our country. This action, and the situation that resulted from it, has hurt an enormous number of families, including several in Washington state. In fact, a constituent of the district I represent, a man who risked his life and the lives of his family by selflessly volunteering as an interpreter in support of U.S. forces in Iraq, was affected by this travel ban.

I demand the Statue of Liberty Values Act—the SOLVE Act—be voted on and passed by the House. This legislation would rescind and defund this ill-considered and harmful executive order that hurts refugees and many others who are arbitrarily denied the ability to travel to the United States. By sowing confusion in a thinly veiled attempt to ban an entire religion from entering our country, the President has clearly shown his inability or unwillingness to govern in an reasoned and inclusive manner.

KRISTINA BURGOS EARNS GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kristina Burgos of Sugar Land, TX, for earning her Girl Scout Gold Award.

The Gold Award is the highest achievement a Girl Scout can earn. To earn this distinguished award, Kristina had to spend at least 80 hours developing and executing a project that would benefit the community as well as have a long-term impact on girls. For her Gold award project, Kristina built a granite pathway in the Jardin de La Vida located at the Boys & Girls Club of Richmond-Rosenberg, TX, to make the garden more accessible for people with disabilities. Kristina is a sophomore at Clements High School and aspires to study English or film in college.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Kristina Burgos for earning her Girl Scout Gold Award. We are confident she will have continued success in her future endeavors. We are very proud.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to include in the RECORD the personal stories of families from across the country that have been impacted by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

JC CONNERS—MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

JC Connors came to his mother over five years ago worrying and wanting to get off of drugs. Unfortunately—by that time—he had little control over his addiction; his brain was shutting down and we didn't understand. On August 13, 2016 JC succumbed to the disease of addiction; he overdosed and died. He was 38 years old!

How does a hard-working, healthy man become severely addicted to drugs? It shocked us all. Some time ago, JC was introduced to oxycodone, a simple pill, that a friend told him would help with stress and make him

"feel good"—adding that the best part was that it wasn't easily detected and didn't get you in trouble like alcohol. Unaware, JC took the pill, not realizing the downfall that was about to happen.

JC wasn't your stereotypical addicted individual. He was high-functioning, worked hard at his job, and spent time with his family. He fooled them all by managing his everyday life so well. But slowly over time he started to deteriorate. JC eventually shared with his mother what he came to realize later: "This so called 'medicine' shouldn't be on the market. It's misused. I'm really sick. Something's wrong. My minds off."

After realizing this JC tried hard to stop but couldn't, with each attempted he was further consumed by his addiction. His family tried seeing doctors, therapists, etc., but they all seemed detached. JC was only a number in a long line of individuals also struggling with an addiction. We tried outpatient therapy but that didn't work either.

At another program, his family learned how this particular drug stops your brain from producing the "right" chemicals to function and if this continues part of your mind goes missing. We also learned that it can take years for the brain to recover and start producing these much needed chemicals again for health brain functioning. Meanwhile, the individual just wants to feel "okay" and as hard as they try the only way to function "okay" is going back on the drug.

JC overdosed Thanksgiving 2015 and survived. He overdosed for a second time this past June, again, he survived. He then spent five days in the hospital with complications related to this overdose. The day JC was released, neither the doctors nor the staff learned or inquired about his past history with addiction, they only sent him home with the suggestion he see a therapist. So, his family trusted the professionals. Two months later, JC was gone. He had fallen through the cracks and we didn't understand fully the depth of his struggles until it was too late.

My daughter asked me to write this so JC's story would be heard and to relate this message to everyone: we need to be aware and come to terms with the realization of what these drugs do to the human brain, yet these drugs are out there and way too easy to come by. Why is this happening? We need to sympathize, understand and help those struggling with addiction, not stigmatize them. JC was told by many professionals that, "he had to want help and had to want to help himself." The outside help he did try failed him, so he thought he was better off overcoming his struggles on his own. We, his family didn't understand the severity of his addiction, so we let him try. We came to realize this was a terrible mistake! Professionals need to make it VERY clear to both the individual and their families that overcoming addiction can't be easily done on their own. Additionally, they need to better help us, the families, understand that our loved ones might not be thinking rationally due to the addiction compromising healthy brain functioning.

Yes, JC chose to use, but had little knowledge of the effects these drugs have on the brain because they aren't being properly explained to the public. His last years were a hard existence and he paid the ultimate price, but my son was so much more than his addiction. He was a kind, sincere, caring person, who would do anything for anyone. A kid at heart, JC believed there was good in everyone and truly wanted to turn his life around. He was a great man who was loved by so many, who just made a terrible mistake, but so did the medical system.

ANTHONY FIORE—WARRINGTON,
PENNSYLVANIA

Growing up, Anthony tried to fit in with the "good kids," but was shunned on many occasions. He then began to change to fit into a group that would accept him. This group of friends started smoking pot in 8th grade, and transitioned to Oxycontin by 12th grade. Anthony always wanted to have friends and was very loyal to them.

Anthony was very intelligent—he never had to study but always had above a 3.5 GPA. He enjoyed making people laugh, and would joked around a lot. He got accepted into Penn State's Main Campus in State College, PA, based on his SAT scores and his GPA. In his sophomore year he joined a fraternity.

During Christmas break in 2009, Anthony told his family he was addicted to Oxycontin. He said he could detox at home, and would take some time off before returning to college. This was the first time his parents heard anything about this.

In January 2010, Anthony returned to school and started using again. When he came home at the end of the semester, his family sent him to a relative's house for the summer—far away from anything that we thought could trigger his addiction. The entire summer they kept in touch with Anthony; he was passing drug tests, and everything seemed to be going well. Anthony wanted to go back and finish college, so his family let him return that fall.

It was not until early 2011, that Anthony's family found out he was using again. They then pulled him out of school on medical leave, but this time he went to a 28 day inpatient treatment center. When he returned, everything seemed fine. Anthony had a friend pick him up to go to Narcotics Anonymous meetings and he would show his family the various chips he received for being clean for a certain amount of time. It appeared that he was clean and again, his family allowed him to return to Penn State.

At some point, Anthony switched to heroin because it was significantly cheaper. Two of his best friends, one day, came to Anthony's parents house and told them Anthony was injecting heroin. Because of their courage, his family had more time with Anthony. Anthony was then referred to an inpatient rehab facility in Pennsylvania. At the time his family didn't have insurance, so they only kept Anthony for about five days; just long enough to detox. While there, Anthony was diagnosed with depression but his family were never informed of this diagnosis. That summer Anthony stayed home, worked, and seemed to be doing fine. His family refused to let him go back to Penn State's main campus; so Anthony enrolled at the Abington campus, which was about 30 minutes from our home.

What his family later came to find out was that Anthony made a copy of his dad's car key and was sneaking out in the middle of the night to get heroin. At some point he added cocaine to the mix. On May 23, 2013, Anthony overdosed in his parent's basement. One of the boys he was with came and got his mother, and she called 911. Anthony was given Naloxone, which saved his life.

In the emergency room the nurses tried to give him another Naloxone shot, but Anthony wouldn't allow it—he wanted to enjoy what was left of his high. This shows how powerful of a hold heroin has on its victims; less than an hour earlier Anthony had almost died but he still wanted the drug. Because his heroin usage depressed his breathing so much, fluid built up in his lungs, and Anthony developed pneumonia.

Anthony then tried Vivitrol, another relapse prevention medication; this was given as a shot every 28 days by a doctor. When

Anthony started receiving his shots, it worked. Then one day, Anthony told his family he wasn't going to get the shot anymore. They did everything we could to convince him and in the end they told Anthony he could no longer live them if he wasn't going to get the shot.

In the summer of 2013, Anthony and some other boys robbed a drug dealer, thinking that a drug dealer wouldn't go to the police. A warrant was issued. Months later, Anthony was stopped for possession of heroin, and when police found out about the warrant for the robbery, he was sent to prison. His family refused to bail him out, despite Anthony's constant pleas. They felt, at the time, prison was where he needed to be; at least we knew he would be safe and clean.

After about a month in prison, a private criminal defense attorney was hired; who was able to arrange Anthony's release on his own recognizance, on the condition that he immediately enter an inpatient rehab facility. By this time, we had insurance but the program only guaranteed 21 days. His family begged them to keep him longer, but they said that's all our insurance would cover.

When Anthony was released, he truly wanted to stay clean. He started cooking dinner for the family and hanging out with his younger brother, which he never did before. "It was great to see my two boys together," writes Anthony's mother. "They went to movies, to the gym, and did various things brothers do together. I finally had my Anthony back and we felt like he had won. He looked good, acted fine, and was not argumentative and agitated as he was when using. Anthony was doing well and saving to move out on his own."

While Anthony was living with his family, they told him none of the boys he previously hung around with could come over again and he should find new friends. This lasted about four or five months, and one day he told us one of his old friends was coming over. Anthony said he was the only other person he knew who was also clean; but in reality, this friend was not clean and was still using. This friend was with Anthony the entire night and morning when he died. He said he didn't have any idea what happened, however, he did find time to steal Anthony's debit/credit card from his body, and proceed to spend \$2,500.00.

"I found my son's body," writes his mother. "What an awful thing for a mother to go through. We are broken. Anthony is not defined by his addiction. He was a loving and caring son, brother, grandson, nephew, and cousin. He was very intelligent, kind, thoughtful, and funny. He was a hard-working young man with a bright future."

MEGAN ROSE KELLEY—APPLETON, WISCONSIN

Megan Rose Kelly, forever 22, was the youngest of four siblings. From a young age, Megan was helpful and always nice to people—she was a joy to be around. Growing up, Megan was involved in soccer and Girl Scouts. She was well-liked by everyone who met her.

Megan, who was a kind and beautiful girl, had a lot of insecurities. In the eighth grade, to better fit in with her peers, Megan started hanging around with people who were drinking to have fun. As things progressively got out of hand, Megan's mother turned to a social worker for help. Megan was put in counseling and an outpatient drug treatment.

At 14, Megan met a guy who was seven months younger and had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Through this destructive relationship, Megan turned to shoplifting and began experimenting with more drugs. By sophomore year of high school, Megan started skipping school, which resulted in truancy charges.

Throughout high school, Megan got into enough trouble where she had to serve time in jail and was court ordered to be on probation for three years. After two years, her probation officer decided to take her off of probation. Things then started to settle down for Megan, until the summer of 2013, when her mother was told that Megan was addicted to prescription painkillers. She confronted Megan, but denied it. Later that summer, Megan and her boyfriend of four years got into huge argument and broke up. Soon afterwards, she started seeing another guy.

Megan's mother spoke with Megan multiple times about her addiction, and each time she blew her off. On November 2, 2013, her mother spent the entire day with Megan and her new boyfriend cleaning her house. Around 4:30 PM Megan and her mother both left; Megan went to work and her mother drove home.

Around 10:10 PM that night, Megan's mother received a phone call from her sister telling her that Megan's boyfriend was dead. It was found out that Megan's boyfriend had been snorting Percocet throughout the day, and died as a result. Shortly afterwards, two of his friends showed Megan how to inject heroin. By March 2014, Megan came to her mother and asked her for help, sending Megan to a rapid detox facility in Detroit. Megan's mother was reluctant to spend the \$7,800, but Megan begged and said it was a matter of life or death.

After Megan completed detox, she got so sick she ended up having to go to the hospital and was hooked up to an IV. She was diagnosed with pancreatitis, caused by heroin use. This was when her mother first found out Megan was using heroin, and the nightmare had only just begun.

Three days later, after being discharged from the hospital, Megan was arrested and charged with four felony counts involving heroin. The next day at court, Megan's mother paid \$10,000 to bail Megan out.

Over the next five months, Megan's mother thought she was doing great; Megan was passing all of her drug tests. One night, Megan was stopped by the police because her car windows were too darkly tinted, and was rearrested when they found syringes on her.

Megan spent four months in jail before she was sentenced. During her sentencing, the judge said that heroin was a powerful drug, only to deny Megan a nine-month court-ordered inpatient treatment program for a drug that kills. Four months into her sentence, Megan relapsed, overdosed, and died. "My life forever changed that day," writes Megan's mother. "Her sentence became a death penalty."

KIRSTYN KING—RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Kirstyn King was born in the early afternoon on December 8, 1990. She was a perfect baby and everything her family had hoped for in an infant daughter. The first time they saw her tiny, sweet face, they were overwhelmed with love, hope and emotions they had never experienced before. Her mother saw her own future and past in Kirstyn's eyes and cried with joy, she knew she'd do everything to protect her child and new family.

As the years went by, Kirstyn's mother worked hard and elevated their financial status to a six-figure income. A lot happens over the passage of time and in that particular period there were mostly beautiful memories, but, unfortunately, there were also agonizing ones that still haunt her today. Despite her every attempt to shield her family from life's worst, Kirstyn was harmed and sexually exploited when she was a young teenager. This started a slow avalanche as she rebelled and struggled. Her

mother tried to help her but she felt so powerless. Kirstyn's despair was evident and her mothers attempts to make it all go away were futile.

"Around this time, I injured my back falling down the stairs," writes Kirstyn's mother. "The physical pain was unlike anything I had ever experienced. This led to a prescription pill addiction that bottomed out in a horrible way. After layoff and foreclosure, I began writing my own prescriptions to support my escalating habit. I ended up in jail. I had never been in trouble in my life and suddenly I was a felon, effectively homeless and jobless, after being a homeowner twice over with a promising career."

"My children never used drugs more than the occasional sampling. Kirstyn suffered from anxiety and once I went to jail, the mom that had always saved the day was powerless to help her. Her fiancé transferred with a government contractor to England and her brother, nearly 18, moved with his father to California. She felt alone and began heavily and carelessly self-medicating."

Kirstyn was shy, gentle and gorgeous. She adored animals and wanted to save all of them. She would find the least attractive, the most broken of the bunch, and that would be the cat or dog she wanted to take home. From tadpoles to earthworms, there wasn't a creature that she was afraid of and didn't love. She had an infectious belly laugh and always saw the best in others. She complemented other girls and gave the most she could of her wonderful soul. She was the life of the party and a risk-taker with a childlike spirit. Her light wasn't reciprocated. In fact, it was abused. On October 16, 2011, Kirstyn lost her life to her brief addiction. I was in jail and could do nothing. All I can tell you is that it is a grief I'll never be able to fully comprehend or articulate.

"As a recovered addict and grieving mother of a 20 year old who lost her promising life to addiction, I know we must do more," writes Kirstyn's mother. "Those in recovery who are able to speak must be heard and represented in this fight to find solutions for this crippling American epidemic. We can't continue to villainize and hunt for the dealer or "that bad kid" that influenced our child. We need to dig deep, open our eyes and ask, why does America hurt? We are a nation in crisis."

MATT KLOSOWSKI—BEAR, DELAWARE

Have you ever met a guy whose smile could light up a room? Who made you feel like you had found a long lost friend? The kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back? That guy who brings every stray dog home and makes it a member of the family? That was Matt Klosowski. He had that happy-go-lucky personality that drew people in and made them fall in love. Unfortunately for Matt, he never loved himself enough. He experimented with marijuana in high school and after graduating to pills, ended up in his first 30 days inpatient treatment facility.

Matt went on to become an excellent mechanic. He moved to the beach, bought a home and opened his own business. His adult life appeared successful and drug-free. Matt's family took a deep breath and started to relax, only to discover soon after that Matt was hiding his addiction. At first it was just casual use—a Saturday night party or coming down from a busy week of work. But he was slipping back into the deadly mindset that made him believe he was in control.

The beginning of the end began when Matt suffered a back injury—he had been lifting an engine when he felt a pop. The next day he could barely walk. Matt called his mother to let her know that the doctor gave him Percocet. Matt struggled with an addiction to Percocet for seven years. During that

time he lost everything he had worked so hard to gain. He tried to continue working on cars while he was abusing pills, but it was obvious to his steady customers that something was terribly wrong and they took their business elsewhere. His business closed six months after his injury. After missing too many mortgage payments his beach house was repossessed by the bank. Everything he loved now gone.

During those seven years Matt was in and out of treatment. Due to his insurance, however, Matt was never permitted to stay for the length of time he needed to learn how to handle life without pills. He would come home clean and his family would look into his clear eyes and thank God that Matt was back. He was such a joy to be around. He didn't want to be tortured by cravings. Our life would start to feel normal again but his family's joy was short-lived when, within a matter of weeks, Matt returned to his world of numbness and the cycle began again.

Matt's last attempt to get clean took place at a treatment center close to home. As his mother watched Matt struggle with demons that had plagued him for most of his adult life, she was proud and hopeful. Matt was coming back. Each time she visited she was greeted by his clear eyes and beautiful smile. She remembers sitting together looking out over the water. Matt was headed to a recovery home in Florida. She was unsure about his decision but remembered every book she read always talked about how different people, places and things are the best choice to support new sobriety. When Matt left for Florida on June 2, 2014, he wrapped her up in a big bear hug and told her he was so happy to have the monkey off his back. Little did she know that monkey would find him in Florida.

Matt was starting a new life and Once again he was living by the sea—his happy place. He found a job, his self esteem returned, and his mother believe that this was his "ah-ha" moment, that finally he was in a good place.

For reasons her heart will never understand, Matt relapsed and died. He lost his battle on January 3rd, 2015.

CAROL HODGES

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carol Hodges for being honored by the Arvada Chamber with the Chairman's Choice Award.

The Chairman's Choice Award is selected annually by the Chairman of the Arvada Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to recognize a member of the community who has shown leadership and outstanding support to the Arvada Chamber.

Carol Hodges serves the Arvada Chamber and her community with a sense of pride, energy and commitment. She is always willing to step up when called upon and works diligently to see each project through to the end. Carol's kindness and service has made a difference in Arvada and helped make it a great place to live, work and play.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Carol Hodges for this well-deserved recognition by the Arvada Chamber of Commerce.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4,

1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 2, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 7

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services
To receive a closed briefing on cyber threats.

SVC-217

FEBRUARY 8

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine Inspector General recommendations for improving Federal agencies.

SH-216

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold an oversight hearing to examine modernizing our nation's infrastructure.

SD-406

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine the current readiness of United States forces.

SR-232A

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine emergency management in Indian Country, focusing on improving the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Federal-tribal relationship with Indian tribes.

SD-628

FEBRUARY 9

10 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the United States, the Russian Federation, and the challenges ahead.

SD-419