

schools and community college campuses, creating tens of thousands of new construction jobs. The American Clean Energy and Security Act creates incentives for new research and development, creating thousands of new job opportunities related to the production of advanced batteries, wind turbines, solar power, and other sustainable technologies. In addition, Madam Speaker, we passed a number of bills to spur small business job creation through tax incentives and employment opportunities for our veterans.

Ultimately, for sustainable job growth, the private sector must feel comfortable to return to hiring employees. Large companies will not expand while the value of their firm drops. Small companies will not expand while the owners' assets are disappearing. And those assets did drop. From its high of over 14,000 in October of 2007, the Dow Jones Industrial Average began a precipitous decline to just over 6,600 in March of this year. Since then, thanks to our actions, the market has recovered more than 50 percent.

Companies will not expand while consumer confidence declines, and it did decline to 25 points in February of this year, the lowest level since the conference board's inception in 1967. Since then, thanks again to our actions, consumer confidence has continued to improve, hitting 48.7 in October, almost doubling.

Companies will not expand, Madam Speaker, while the national economy is contracting, and it did indeed contract, starting in the third quarter of 2008. It declined an astounding 6.3 percent in the fourth quarter and 5.7 percent in the first quarter of 2009, but our actions have helped. GDP increased 2.8 percent in the third quarter of 2009 and continues to grow this quarter as well.

This February, the horrific pace of job losses began to ease. Job losses in May fell to 300,000. In August through October, they averaged 135,000 a month. In November, just 11,000 jobs, net, were lost in the American economy, continuing to contribute to the decline in the unemployment rate.

Madam Speaker, we're not out of the woods just yet. Millions of Americans are still out of work. But we've started to turn the economy around. We've begun to stabilize the stock market, the housing sector, and the GDP. Madam Speaker, we've begun to create conditions for job growth, and now we must partner with the private sector to ensure that millions of Americans can return to work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DICKS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE REDMEN OF SMITH CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on the Kansas prairie, in a small town named Smith Center, an exceptional tradition has been built and maintained over the course of decades. The Redmen of Smith Center High School have achieved great things on the football field.

There are few, if any, high school football fans in Kansas who are unaware of Smith Center's reputation. The parents and boosters of Smith Center High School have watched with pride as their sons bested opponents on the gridiron in 79 consecutive contests. Coach Roger Barta and his Redmen football team have won over 300 games in the past 32 seasons. They've racked up eight State championships, five of them in a row.

Smith Center was on the longest active 11-man high school football winning streak in the Nation. The streak was snapped in the Kansas State 2-1A championship game 2 weeks ago. Every player on the Redman football squad, from freshman to senior, experienced their first high school defeat at the hands of the Centralia High School Panthers. It was a heartbreaking loss for an extraordinary group of boys.

I had the opportunity to participate in several pregame coin flips over the past few seasons, including this year's State title game. Each time I witnessed a very talented football team with a very spirited group of fans. Yet, all the success the team has enjoyed on the field has never been what makes them so remarkable. Football is just what attracts notoriety and our applause. It's the building of character and lifelong traits that matter in Smith Center. Following their first loss in 6 years, Coach Barta reminded his players, "We've never judged ourselves on wins and losses."

The truly exceptional work being done on the plains of Kansas is the development of character in the boys of the Smith Center football team and the students of Smith Center High School. It is the respect each athlete is taught by their coaches. It's the insistence of integrity insisted upon by their teachers. It's the values instilled in each son by their parents and community.

Joe Drape, a New York Times Sports writer, recently authored a book entitled, "Our Boys: A Perfect Season on the Plains with the Smith Center Redmen." In his book, Mr. Drape extols the virtues we, in rural America, hold dear. Humility, sacrifice, unwavering commitment, all are characteristics that are exemplified by the Redmen and their fans. Additionally, as I was told by one of the game officials after the State title game, this is the only team that year after year, every game, they gather on the field, hold hands,

and a prayer is offered by one of the coaches or one of the players on the team.

Redmen football is what received the attention, but behind the scenes is where the most impressive and longest lasting accomplishments are discovered. Football is simply a teaching tool used by the community. Coach Barta was quoted in the book as stating, "None of this is really about football. What we're doing is sending kids into life who know that every day means something."

This attitude exemplifies the teaching, coaching, and parenting philosophy of rural America. Our population may be dwindling and our communities aging, but our commitment to raising good children and preparing them for life after high school is something that will never diminish. School pride is important to a community, but it pales in comparison to the role a teacher, coach, or parent plays when he or she helps a child succeed. I'm thankful that Coach Barta and his staff understand this, and I'm thankful to come from a part of the country that understands this.

Congratulations to the Smith Center Redmen, their football team, for their remarkable success, and thanks to the team, the community, and the school that are such great ambassadors for our way of life on the plains of Kansas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING THE LIFE OF REAR ADMIRAL DAVID M. STONE, USN (RET.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and mourn the loss of a great American. Rear Admiral David M. Stone, United States Navy (Retired) recently passed away, and as a result, we are a lesser Nation. He was a proud son of Illinois, not the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, my State, but I am compelled to see that the achievements of this remarkable man are forever captured in the record of our proceedings because Dave Stone was my shipmate.

We graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1974 and served together as fellow Surface Warfare Officers at sea and ashore for nearly three decades. In the course of those years, I witnessed Dave Stone consistently offer our Nation all of his enormous talent and energy. At the Academy, he led Navy's basketball team with an unmatched passion and competitive spirit.

Upon commissioning as an ensign, he went to sea with the work ethic, sense of responsibility, and selflessness that characterized the very best of the graduates of Annapolis, his reputation across the fleet reflecting an unflinching dedication to leading sailors from the front, by example, and with a total commitment to their personal and professional excellence. He never forgot the importance of a sailor's family, and he put in countless hours tending to the concerns of the parents, wives, and children who sacrifice so much in offering their loved ones to the naval service.

Tactically, his fighting spirit and natural sense of competition drove him to constantly press his systems, operators, and decisionmakers to outthink and outfight every adversary. When our fleet was challenged by serious maintenance concerns, he rolled up his sleeves and took charge of the most complex engineering plant the Navy had devised. He set a standard for engineering readiness that astounded only those who did not know him. As a result, his rise through the ranks was deservedly fast.

Every ship and sailor he served reached new standards of excellence. He commanded the USS *John Hancock* (DD 981), Destroyer Squadron 50, NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean, and the USS *Nimitz* Aircraft Carrier Battle Group with skill, courage, and extraordinary professionalism.

He was the officer our Nation needed in the Persian Gulf as that theater became increasingly dangerous. He was the surface warrior best qualified to support actions in the Adriatic that helped close hostilities in Kosovo quickly and favorably. On his promotion to admiral, he was an officer with precisely the strategic vision, intellect, and sense of the world our Navy and Nation needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Following retirement from the naval service, his patriotism and sense of responsibility continued unabated. As the first Federal Security Director at Los Angeles International Airport, and later as head of the Transportation Security Administration, he helped secure our national transportation infrastructure so quickly and so completely that his work stands out as one of our government's greatest and most impressive post-9/11 achievements.

However, Dave always considered his greatest achievement the fortune to fall in love with and marry his wonderful bride, Cynthia Faith Voth of Clearwater, Florida. Together, Dave and Faith represented all that was right and good about life in the naval service. They were partners and best friends through the joy and pain of countless deployments, household moves, and the pressures of ever-increasing responsibilities for the safety of our Nation's greatest treasure—the young men and women who wear the uniform of our military.

Madam Speaker, I ask that we pause to reflect upon the many contributions Admiral Dave Stone made to our country and the world and to thank Faith Stone for inspiring her husband to serve us all so proudly. Through the pain and frustration of losing this great shipmate, everyone who knew, loved, and respected Dave is comforted by the fact that today, there are countless Midshipmen at Annapolis who will follow his example and seek to model their life on his legacy. Therein lies the greatness of the United States Navy and our Nation and our shipmate and classmate, Dave Stone.

DEMOCRACY IN HONDURAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, following the antics of Zelaya, Chavez, and Ortega, there were growing concerns over the ability of free people in the Western Hemisphere to defend democratic principles and institutions against the assaults of these and other oppressors belonging to ALBA. However, the fierce commitment to democracy and the rule of law demonstrated by the people of Honduras have renewed our optimism about the future of freedom and the consolidation of democracy in our region.

Last week the Honduran National Congress voted decisively to reject Manuel Zelaya's return to office. The Supreme Court made the same ruling months ago, and now it is final. The Honduran Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the National Commission for Human Rights, and the Honduran General Accounting Office were all consulted prior to this congressional vote and unanimously rejected Zelaya's return.

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The United States has accepted the decision as a matter left to the discretion of the national Congress, and even some of Manuel Zelaya's strongest supporters inside Honduras have finally publicly stated that their mission is no longer publicly focused on his resolution.

The writing is on the wall, Madam Speaker. The people of Honduras are ready to write the post-Zelaya chapter of their nation's history. The newly elected President, Porfirio Lobo Sosa, has already taken steps to help bring national reconciliation to Honduras. Last week, he began meeting with individuals from broad spectrums of the Honduran government and society to discuss long-term goals for the future and stability of Honduras, and he has already warned Chavez not to intervene with Honduras' sovereignty.

The Honduran people have had enough of Chavez's meddling in their internal affairs. It is time for responsible nations—and specifically for us in the United States—to turn the page

and rebuild the relationship with the people of Honduras.

I am pleased that the Obama administration has finally lifted the travel alert on Honduras, which has had a severe economic impact on the well-being of American businesses operating in the country. However, this is just the beginning. Honduras is a traditional ally of the United States and a vital partner to us in our regional counternarcotics effort. It is under attack by narcotraffickers and their violent network. Just this morning, General Julian Aristides Gonzalez, the top anti-drug official in Honduras, was assassinated. Witnesses report that his body was riddled with bullets. General Gonzalez and other high-ranking law enforcement officials engaged in the counternarcotics efforts in Honduras are declared targets of the drug-trafficking network in the country. The use of Honduras as a drug transit country threatens our vital security interests.

As such, the U.S. must immediately restore all assistance, particularly counternarcotics cooperation, to Honduras. Visas and other nonsecurity-related assistance must also be reinstated.

Today, Honduran President-elect Lobo travels to San Jose to meet with President Oscar Arias. Tomorrow he will meet with Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli in Tegucigalpa. Also on Thursday, Lobo will visit the Dominican Republic to meet with President Leonel Fernandez.

Meanwhile, Zelaya stays hidden. He cannot face the truth of his transgressions. He has said, "As long as I have Brazil's support, I will be here." Well, Brazil, the OAS and any other country or body should not help him be so cowardly. The OAS should stand up to Zelaya and the enablers of oppression so that freedom can prevail.

Regrettably, the MERCOSUR countries—of which Brazil is a member—announced during their meeting just today that they will not recognize the Honduran elections. But the Honduran people will not be deterred. They have spoken loud and clear. The Honduran people were brave enough to put their principles to the test. They looked to their Congress, they looked to their Supreme Court, and finally they looked to themselves and carried out peaceful and successful elections.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to quote from Honduran President-elect Lobo, who perhaps best summarized recent developments in Honduras. Following his victory—which was resounding—he said, there were "no winners or losers, only democracy has triumphed. I am happy looking toward to the future. You keep asking, 'And Zelaya?' Zelaya is history, he is part of the past."

Madam Speaker, may democracy and freedom continue to triumph in the hemisphere and throughout the world.

Thank you for the time.