

their lives to save a young boy who was trapped in his bedroom as flames engulfed his family's apartment. Thanks to their bravery, 2-year-old Justin Aruomah is in stable condition and continues to improve daily.

We must never take for granted the men and women of the local fire departments across the country who courageously respond to emergencies on a daily basis, risking their lives to save those of others. Their willingness to face danger in order to serve and protect their communities affords us a peace of mind that too often goes underappreciated.

Madam Speaker, I am humbled by the firefighters of the Long Beach Fire Department, whose bravery and devotion to their community is nothing short of heroic. The events of last Monday, December 6, 2010 is only one of many moving examples of this heroism.

Just after midnight, firefighter Chuck Hakopian and Carston Sorenson rushed into a burning apartment. They ran up the apartment's stairs through billowing clouds of smoke and into a bedroom that was engulfed in flames. The floor in the room was so weakened by the fire that Mr. Hakopian fell through the floor to his elbows. After pulling himself up and out of the collapsed floor, he rushed into a second bedroom, where he found 2-year-old Justin Aruomah lying face down on the floor. As Mr. Sorenson battled the flames with a fire hose, Mr. Hakopian covered the boy's head and body and rushed him out of the burning house to awaiting paramedics Mark Miller and Joyce Vanderweide. Justin was unconscious, but alive. As he was rushed to the hospital, Ms. Vanderweide and Mr. Miller were able to revive his breathing. Justin was soon placed in critical condition. Thanks to these brave men and women he is alive and recuperating.

I do not share this story of bravery and sacrifice because it is any way uncommon. The firefighters of the Long Beach Fire Department, along with departments across the country, risk their lives every day to protect people who they have never met. These acts of selflessness are typically accompanied by little fanfare. These brave men and women simply return to work the next day to await the call of duty.

I share this story because it is a powerful reminder of the need to support the men and women who stand ready to serve our communities, day and night. We have an obligation to provide our firefighters—along with our police officers, paramedics, and all other emergency responders—with the resources that they need to do their job successfully and as safely as possible. This means providing enough funding for them to afford all the necessary training and cutting-edge equipment. This is the right thing to do for the men and women who dedicate their lives to serving our communities.

As the Chair of the Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Communication, Preparedness, and Response, supporting our emergency responders is one of my top priorities in Congress. Emergency situations cannot always be prevented, but their effects can be mitigated by ensuring that emergency responders have all the resources that they need to protect us.

Again, I thank Chuck Hakopian, Mark Miller, Joyce Vanderweide, and Carston Sorenson of the Long Beach Fire Department and the emergency responders all across the country who risk their lives on behalf of their communities. Your courage and selflessness do not go unnoticed.

IN HONOR OF ALEX MACHASKEE

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Alex Machaskee of Warren, Ohio on the occasion of his being honored by the American Nationalities Movement, and for his lifetime of service, commitment, and dedication to the greater Cleveland community.

Mr. Machaskee graduated from Cleveland State University with a bachelor's degree in marketing. He worked at the Warren Tribune before joining the Plain Dealer in 1960. He moved up the ranks, becoming Publisher and President in 1990. In this position he initiated a large expansion program, in which the Plain Dealer improved the quality of its service by investing in a new facility, a redesigned distribution system, and expanded coverage of local news. He retired in 2006, capping a 46-year career at the Plain Dealer.

As a result of his prolific career in journalism, Mr. Machaskee has been recognized by many local organizations and institutions. He has received honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Cleveland State University, the University of Akron, and Heidelberg College. Some of his honors and awards include the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition Organization, the Whitney M. Young Humanitarian Award from the Urban League of Cleveland, and the Nonprofit Board Executive of the Year Award from the World Trade Center Cleveland. He has also been inducted into the Northeast Ohio Business and Cleveland Journalism Halls of Fame.

In a further demonstration of his dedication and commitment to the Cleveland community, Mr. Machaskee has been welcomed into the boards of many local nonprofit organizations. Some of the cultural institutions whose boards he joined include the Musical Arts Association of the Cleveland Orchestra, the International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Council on World Affairs, the Cleveland Opera, and United Way Services.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Alex Machaskee for his decades of commitment and service to the greater Cleveland area. His leadership of the Plain Dealer and his efforts in greater Cleveland area nonprofit organizations demonstrate the strength of his character and the dedication he feels to his community. I commend Mr. Machaskee and wish him success in his future efforts.

RETIREED MAJOR GENERAL FRED-  
ERICK HARWOOD "FRED"  
FORSTER

**HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, Retired Major General Frederick Harwood "Fred" Forster passed away on November 18, 2010, after a long and very brave battle with cancer. I do not know another person who has met

such a challenge with more strength, faith, and grace.

Fred was a very patriotic American and one of the finest men I have ever known. He had an immeasurable impact on Blount County, Tennessee, and the United States in many positive ways.

Upon reporting the news of his death, The Daily Times newspaper in Maryville, Tennessee, referred to Fred as "a community treasure."

Fred's pastor at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church said Blount County has lost a "great man and friend to this community," and he continued on to say that, "(Fred) believed in prayer and accepted the will of God without complaint. Dignity, respect, honor, faith, love, commitment; these are the words that describe Fred."

Sharon Hannum, Chair of the Blount County Chamber Foundation, said, "I have met no stronger, dedicated and compassionate leader than in the person of Fred Forster."

Former Maryville Mayor Joe Swann said, "His steadfastness in the face of such adversity makes him the solidier we point to and say, 'I had the great privilege of knowing that remarkable man.'"

Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, a native of Maryville himself, called Fred a friend and said, "Blount County and I will miss him greatly."

Fred is perhaps best known for his success in the military. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1968, his accomplishments as a pilot and natural leadership abilities propelled Fred to the rank of assistant adjutant general of the Tennessee Air National Guard at the time of his retirement in 2003.

During his 35-year service, he served as commander of the 134th Air Refueling Wing, Tennessee Air National Guard, and chief of staff of the Tennessee Air National Guard.

Fred's time in the military took him through the Air Command and Staff College, Army Command and General Staff College, and Air War College. He received countless decorations, including a Bronze Star, and served in Thailand and the United Arab Emirates, playing an important role in the liberation of Kuwait during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Fred also found much success in community development. He served as chief executive officer of the Blount Partnership, a venture made up by the Blount County Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Board, Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau and Blount Chamber Foundation.

His time at the Chamber is admired by all who were lucky enough to work with him until his retirement earlier this year.

As you would imagine, Fred's work did not stop with the military or his time at the Chamber. He devoted much time to other civic and private organizations too numerous to name in this space.

Fred was buried with full military honors at Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, and I attended his graveside service along with many hundreds of other people. It was very obvious to everyone who was there how loved and respected he was in the community.

Recently, Fred's father-in-law, Garland DeLozier, also passed away. Garland was a community leader in his own right, and I offer my condolences to Fred's wife, Carolyn, who has lost her husband and father in such a short span of time.

Before his passing, Fred said of Carolyn, "She was invaluable. Couldn't ask for a better supporter and a partner and a helper and sustainer."

Fred's daughter Rebecca was one of my House Pages and is now a member of my staff, and her sister, Joy, interned for me in 1996. I know the pain myself of losing a father at about their age, but they should have much comfort in knowing how loved and admired their dad was by everyone and how proud he was of their own accomplishments.

Fred was very devoted to his family, and he will be greatly missed by Carolyn, Joy, and Rebecca, as well as his daughter, Katherine; grandchildren Drew and Caroline; mother, Harriet; and sister, Jane.

Madam Speaker, I urge my Colleagues and other readers of the RECORD to join me in celebrating the extraordinary life of Major General Fred Forster. His life and accomplishments are without comparison, and he will forever be an example to all those who knew him.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

#### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today our national debt is \$13,848,017,156,749.09.

On January 6th, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$3,209,591,410,455.20 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

#### IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF CLEVELANDPEOPLE.COM

#### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the developers and sponsors of ClevelandPeople.com on their recognition at the American Nationalities Movement's Christmas Luncheon. ClevelandPeople.com was selected for this honor because of the website's crucial role in supporting the social life and cultural richness of the city.

Founded in 1959 by Ralph Perk, the American Nationalities Movement consists of representatives of over 50 nationalities in the Cleveland area that come together to celebrate their unique heritages. Each year during its Christmas Luncheon, it recognizes individuals and groups that have contributed to supporting ethnic groups and celebrating diversity.

Debbie, Dan, and Pat Hanson formed ClevelandPeople.com in 2001 when they decided to condense information about local cultural events and support services onto a few web pages. Over the past nine years, it has

grown into a social hub connecting 64 different groups and receiving thousands of views each day. The website's developers explain that supporting Cleveland's distinct ethnic communities is important not only for maintaining the cultural wealth of the city, but for ensuring its economic prosperity. Cleveland has always been strengthened by its diversity.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating ClevelandPeople.com on their recognition at the American Nationalities Movement's Christmas Luncheon. Their creative and spirit and their devotion for their community continues to support for the cultural diversity that makes this city great.

#### HONORING CHARLES MENG OF NAPA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

#### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Charles Meng, who is being honored this evening on the occasion of his retirement after 20 years of service on the Napa Valley College Board of Trustees. Mr. Meng is retiring from the board to serve as a commissioner on the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Charles has dedicated his life to serving his country and his community. He graduated from West Point in 1957 and was a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He went on to serve as a senior engineer manager in the U.S. Navy's nuclear submarine program. He is completing his fifth four-year term on the Napa Valley College Board of Trustees and was also elected to the Association of Community Colleges Trustees Board in 2004. He has served on many community college accreditation teams and is an expert on community college governance. Charles was the NVC Board's representative on a number of critical college committees, including the Technology Plan Development, Napa River Flood Control project and Mare Island Naval Shipyard closure. He was also on the committees to hire three college presidents.

As the current president and longest serving member of the board, Charles is admired and respected by the entire campus as well as the community at large. An engineer by trade, he is known as a highly intelligent, focused and analytical leader. He is a consensus builder but will not budge on his commitment to preserving access to higher education for all. One of the ways he has demonstrated this commitment is by serving on my service academy review panel, interviewing young people from my district seeking nomination to our Nation's service academies. As a West Point graduate himself, Mr. Meng's insights and experiences serving our country were invaluable in this process. Due to his guidance and support, many were able to fulfill their dream of serving our country as he has.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate at this time that we thank Mr. Charles Meng for the incredible work he has done on behalf of the students of Napa Valley College and for the work he will undoubtedly continue

to do. Napa Valley College is a premier institution for higher learning and will remain that way due in large part to his efforts. I join his family and everyone in the Napa Valley College Community in wishing him continued success and fulfillment.

#### THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSION TRANSPARENCY ACT (H.R. 6484)

#### HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 14, 2010*

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to discuss the Public Employee Pension Transparency Act, H.R. 6484, which I introduced on December 2, 2010, with the Gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. RYAN, and the Gentleman from California, Mr. ISSA. This legislation is designed to enhance the soundness of State and local employee pension benefit plans by providing them the incentives necessary for State and local governments to provide the American people with meaningful disclosure of the value of these plans' assets and liabilities.

State and local governments have promised pension benefits to about 20 million active public employees and another seven million retirees and dependents. According to the states, these pension promises are underfunded by about \$1 trillion. However, this enormous number fails to accurately convey the true magnitude of the cost taxpayers will bear to meet these obligations. Moreover, as a result of a lack of transparency and generous accounting standards, the vast majority of the American people are unaware that their State and local governments collectively owe trillions of dollars for generous public employee pension benefits.

Unlike private pension plans, public employee pension plans are allowed to use unreasonably high discount rates to calculate their liabilities. In fact, many use unrealistic expected rates of returns on their plan assets, the value of which is often inflated, to discount their pension liabilities. Many economists maintain that these practices are misguided and hide the fact that State and local government pension plans are collectively underfunded by more than \$3.8 trillion.

The Public Employee Pension Transparency Act would address this serious situation by requiring State and local government pension plans to disclose the true magnitude of their liabilities to the American people. The bill would condition the continuation of specified Federal tax benefits upon State and local governments' decision to file certain information regarding their pension plans with the Secretary of the Treasury. This information, which would reveal the true extent of public pension debt, would be available to the public through a searchable Web site.

Over the course of the past several years, we have seen trillions of taxpayer funds spent to bailout banks, auto companies, Wall Street, homeowners, and others. The American people are infuriated by these bailouts and are insisting that they end. State and local governments, with their trillions of dollars in hidden public employee pension debt, are next in line. It is time for them to reveal the true cost of their pension promises and to take that action