

people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution thereof of a military government; that they are unfit to be free, and incapable of self government.

The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

We, therefore, the delegates with plenary powers of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare, that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, Sovereign, and independent republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations.

Signed,

Richard Ellis, President of the Convention and Delegate from Red River.

Charles B. Stewart, Tho. Barnett, James Collinsworth, Edwin Waller, Asa Brigham, John S. D. Byrom, Francis Ruis, J. Antonio Navarro, Jesse B. Badgett, Wm D. Lacy, William Menifee, Jn. Fisher, Matthew Caldwell, William Motley, Lorenzo de Zavala, Stephen H. Everett, George W. Smyth, Elijah Stapp, Claiborne West, Wm. B. Scates, M. B. Menard, A. B. Hardin, J. W. Burton, Thos. J. Gazley, R. M. Coleman, Sterling C. Robertson, Geo. C. Childress, Bailey Hardeman, Rob. Potter, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, Chas. S. Taylor, John S. Roberts, Robert Hamilton, Collin McKinney, Albert H. Latimer, James Power, Sam Houston, David Thomas, Edwd. Conrad, Martin Parmer, Edwin O. Legrand, Stephen W. Blount, Jms. Gaines, Wm. Clark, Jr., Sydney O. Pennington, Wm. Carrol Crawford, Jno. Turner, Benj. Briggs Goodrich, G. W. Barnett, James G. Swisher, Jesse Grimes, S. Rhoads Fisher, John W. Moore, John W. Bower, Saml. A. Maverick (from Bejar), Sam P. Carson, A. Briscoe, J. B. Woods, H. S. Kimble, Secretary.

HONORING THE LIVES OF VETERANS KERRY DUDKEWIC, ARNOLD BOCKSEL, AND SEAMUS BYRNE

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives of three veterans who passed away this past weekend.

Mr. Kerry Dudkewic of Smithtown, NY, was 62 years old and a Vietnam veteran and lost his battle with cancer on Friday, February 25, 2011. This past January he was finally given confirmation from the VA that his many ailments were indeed connected to his service and were caused by exposure to Agent Orange. Kerry knew he was very sick and wanted his wife to obtain survivor benefits upon his death. Kerry's commitment to serving others was exhibited throughout his life and I am so grateful I was able to help him in return before his passing.

Mr. Arnold A. Bocksel of Syosset, NY, was a 97-year-old WWII veteran and passed away on Sunday, February 27, 2011, of natural causes. Arnold survived the Bataan Death March and three and a half years in a Japanese prison camp. Arnold was awarded sev-

eral medals, including the Bronze Star and the Prisoner of War Medal. Arnold suffered from service-related injuries and in 2010 he was awarded a check from the VA to make his home handicapped-accessible. Arnold was truly a hero and I was so proud to help get him the support he earned and deserved.

Finally, Mr. Seamus Byrne of Smithtown, NY, was tragically struck by a car and killed on Sunday, February 27, 2011, while walking home with his wife Michelle after celebrating his 33rd birthday with friends. Seamus served with the New York Army National Guard Fighting 69th Infantry Regiment and was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained while serving in Afghanistan. I am so saddened by this, knowing Seamus was finally getting his life back in order after his injuries and knowing his family was finally getting their husband and dad back to normal. Seamus is survived by his 10-year-old son Seamus, his 3-year-old daughter Ashley, and his wife, who is a nurse and tried to save him after he was struck.

Again, I am honored to have had these great men in our community and am grateful for the service they provided to our nation.

HONORING THE STATE OF TEXAS

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the State of Texas on the 175th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Texas.

Texas Independence Day commemorates the adoption of the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. Sixty delegates from across Texas signed the declaration. Its language in many ways parallels our nation's 1776 Declaration of Independence.

Only six days before the signing of Texas' declaration, 150 patriots under the command of Colonel William Barret Travis made their last stand against Santa Anna's Mexican army at the Alamo. Though vastly outnumbered, the Alamo patriots were committed to the cause of liberty for Texas. On February 24th, Colonel Travis dispatched arguably the most historic letter in Texas history, calling for reinforcements. "I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch," pleaded Travis.

The strength of character and commitment to freedom displayed by Colonel Travis and his men has endured in the hearts of every Texan throughout our 175 years as a Republic. It is this spirit that makes Texas great, and has allowed us to weather challenging times. More than ever, I think we could use a lot more of that undeniable Texas spirit and determination in Washington.

It is with great pleasure I take the time to recognize the great State of Texas on this monumental occasion.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY—175 YEARS AGO

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the unique history of the great state of Texas.

Today, March 2, marks Texas Independence Day.

On this day, 175 years ago, Texas declared its independence from Mexico and its dictator, Santa Anna, the 19th century Muammar Gadhafi.

In 1836, in the small farm village of Washington-on-the-Brazos, 54 Texians, as they called themselves in those days, gathered to do something bold and courageous: Sign the Texas Declaration of Independence and once and for all "declare that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent republic."

As these determined delegates met to declare independence, Santa Anna and 6,000 enemy troops were marching on an old beat-up Spanish mission that we now call the Alamo, where Texas defenders stood defiant, stood determined.

They were led by a 27-year-old lawyer by the name of William Barrett Travis.

The Alamo and its 186 Texans were all that stood between the invaders and the people of Texas.

And behind the cold, dark, damp walls of that Alamo, Commander William Barrett Travis sent the following letter to Texas requesting aid.

Here is what this appeal said in part: "To all the people of Texas and Americans throughout the world, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours, but I have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion; otherwise the fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat. I call upon you in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything dear to our character to come to our aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country. Victory or death."—William Barrett Travis, Colonel, Texas Army.

After 13 days of glory at the Alamo, Commander Travis and his men sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom March 6, 1836.

However, those lives would not be lost in vain. Their determination did pay off, and because heroes like Travis, Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie held out so long, Santa Anna's forces took such great losses they became battered and demoralized.

As Travis said, "Victory will cost them more dearly than defeat."

The Alamo defenders were from every State and 13 foreign countries.

They were black, brown, and white. Their ages were 16 through 67, and they were all volunteers.

They were mavericks, revolutionaries, farmers, shopkeepers, and freedom fighters; and

they came together to fight for something they believed in: freedom and independence.

General Sam Houston, in turn, had the time he needed to devise a strategy to rally other Texas volunteers to ultimately defeat Santa Anna in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

The rest is Texas history.

The war was over, and the Lone Star flag was visible all across the broad, bold, brazen plains of Texas.

Texas remained a nation for 9 years and claimed land that now includes part of New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Wyoming, even up to the Canadian border.

In 1845, Texas was admitted to the Union by only one vote when a Louisiana Senator changed his mind.

By Treaty with the United States, Texas may divide into five States, and the Texas flag is to fly even with the U.S. flag and not below it.

Freedom has a cost. It always does. It always will.

And as we pause to remember those who lost their lives so that Texas could be a free Nation, we cannot forget those Americans that are currently fighting in lands across the seas for the United States' continued freedom and liberty today.

Texas Independence Day is a day of pride and reflection in the Lone Star State.

It is a day we remember to pay tribute to heroes like William Barrett Travis, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, Jim Bonham, Sam Houston, and the rest of the volunteers who fought the evil tyrant and terrorist Saint Anna. It was an effort to make Texas free, and that effort was successful.

My first grandson is named Barrett Houston in honor of William Barrett Travis and General Sam Houston.

So, today, we remember that Texas was a glorious nation once and won freedom and independence because some fierce volunteers fought to the death for liberty over tyranny.

On this Texas Independence Day, let us not forget those brave men and women in our military that are fighting to preserve and uphold our freedom from a new world threat of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Congress and the country will join in celebrating this Texas Independence Day.

In Colonel Travis' final letter and appeal for aid, he signed off with three words that I leave with you now: "God and Texas." "God and Texas" and the rest, as they say, is Texas history.

And that's just the way it is, Mr. Speaker.

HONORING CORINNE GRAYSON-THOMAS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Corinne Grayson-Thomas was born in New York City to William and Anna Grayson and attended NYC Public Schools until her family moved to Runyon Heights in Yonkers, New York. She was the first African American woman to graduate from Roosevelt High School, in 1932. She attended City College of New York, majoring in History

and Science, while focusing on political issues, as well as justice and equality. With the war coming, she made the decision to leave college after 3 years and go to work.

She joined Gimbel's Department Store in 1944, became the first African-American Sales Representative, and she remained there until she retired in 1975. She was also the first woman of color to become an Avon Representative and worked with the company for 40 years. Ms. Thomas was very successful as a Team Leader, receiving many awards from the company and being featured in the 1996 February Edition of Essence Magazine in the Avon Ad "Black Has Never Been More Beautiful."

Corinne joined the Terrace City Chapter #26 Order Eastern Star under the affiliation of her father, Worshipful Master William Grayson. After serving as Worthy Matron in 1970, she had several appointments from the Grand Chapter, which included the Grand Marshall in the East and District Deputy Grand Matron. She is an honorary member of Poinsettia Chapter in Spring Valley and a Past Commandress of the Order of Cyrenes.

She was a member of the Nepperhan Community Center for many years and served on the Board of Directors and as president for 5 years (1960–1965). Ms. Thomas was a member of the Social Bridge Club and is an avid bowler in the Runyon Heights Seniors League. She is also a frequent contributor to the Runyon Heights Community Newsletter.

She is widowed and has one daughter, Jean Ann; 2 grandsons, Jathan and Michael and one Great Grand-daughter, Katherine Corinne and has 3 siblings, Muriel, Carol and Gerald.

She believes in spreading love and has spent her whole life doing just that. Her favorite Bible Chapter is 1 Corinthians 13, and the scripture that echoes this principle is "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

I join the Terrace City Chapter in honoring Corinne Grayson-Thomas for her many contributions to the betterment of her community.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF COLORADO BECOMING A TERRITORY

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Colorado becoming a territory of the United States on February 28th, 2011.

The territory was organized as a result of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1858 through 1861. Given its name from the discovery of gold in the foothills of the mountain named for its explorer, Zebulon Pike, this gold rush resulted in a large movement of miners and prospectors to the area in search of their fortunes.

As the initial gold deposits were collected, settlers moved westward into the Rocky Mountains to search for additional deposits, forming camps wherever they were discovered. Denver became the central supply town for these prospectors. More permanent mines emerged and settlers understood the vast

wealth this mineral rich country held, and sought to establish a more concrete set of laws and government.

Colorado officially became a territory of the United States through the signature of President James Buchanan on February 28th, 1861.

The Colorado Territory was formed amid the furor of succession of southern states and matured during our Civil War. Our great state is now a destination for Americans and foreign travelers who come to behold our natural beauty and engage in our superior recreational activities.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps and praise the generations of volunteers who have passed through the program, sharing American ideals with the world and promoting a greater understanding of world cultures on the part of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently 8,655 Peace Corps volunteers serving abroad, and the largest portion of them, 1,134, come from my home state of California. Right now, there are 336 volunteers from the Los Angeles-Long Beach Metropolitan Area, which encompasses my District. In fact, I am proud to say there are only two metropolitan areas that produce more volunteers than my congressional district.

Since the beginning of the program, California has produced over 27,000 Peace Corps volunteers, who, driven by the same pioneering spirit for which California is famous, selflessly contributed a significant portion of their lives to serving others. My alma mater, UCLA, has produced 92 volunteers, ranking it among the top 10 universities that inspire recent graduates to join the program. I salute them all and thank them for the sacrifices they make every day to make the world a better place.

The history of the Peace Corps is tied to its founder, John F. Kennedy, when he was then a candidate for President. On October 14, 1960, he gave a speech at the University of Michigan and lingered afterwards with a group of students, the conversation lasting long into the night. During that meeting, they discussed the idea of a government program whereby young Americans would be sent to developing nations to aid in local projects, mostly centering on education, health, and agriculture. President Kennedy kept this idea and 50 years ago he signed Executive Order 10924, establishing the Peace Corps. It was one of his first acts as President.

Peace Corps volunteers are expected to work for 27 months, during which time they live and work in a developing nation with minimal comforts. After a training period, volunteers are placed in schools, community groups, and with other organizations that lack the capacity to acquire professional staff with specialized skills. Volunteers live on a small stipend and must adapt to the unique challenges posed by living in a different place with different cultures.