

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Marcia Carr as the Okaloosa County Educational Support Professional of the Year. Her passion for the students of Riverside Elementary is laudable and her dedication to her profession is exemplary. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating Mrs. Carr, and we wish her all the best.

STATEMENT ON BILL TO APPROVE
DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS DE-
SIGNATED TO TEST INNOVATIVE
STRATEGIES IN STATE CHILD
WELFARE PROGRAMS

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today, I re-introduced legislation that would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to grant State waivers from certain Federal requirements under the foster care and adoption programs, so States can test innovative strategies to serve children better. Representative GEOFF DAVIS (R-KY) is an original cosponsor of the bill. The legislation is identical to the bill I introduced in September 2010, which passed the House last fall by voice vote. Child welfare waivers will allow interested States to test interventions that help children and families, but they are only a first step toward the comprehensive child welfare financing reform that began with the Fostering Connections Act of 2008. Additional resources and improvements are needed to ensure we provide critical services to all children and families at risk.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve this important goal.

IN MEMORY OF CLARISSA MAE
ROGERS WALKER

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I rise today to mourn the passage of my dear friend and fellow Minnesotan, Clarissa Mae Rogers Walker. Driven by a desire to change the world for the better, Ms. Walker spent her life serving many in need in the Twin Cities community.

Clarissa Walker began working as an operating room technician at the University of Minnesota Hospital. A few years later, Clarissa began working for Sabathani Community Center in 1968. It was at Sabathani that she discovered her passion for social work and she moved up the ladder in the organization because of her dedication and drive. She began as a youth supervisor, moving up the ranks to become a counselor, assistant director, acting executive director, and finally agency director of the Center.

Ms. Walker strengthened the Sabathani community by becoming involved in organizations geared towards helping the disadvantaged. For example: Ms. Walker created and led tax preparation programs which led to

thousands of low-income residents receiving millions of dollars in tax refunds. This program, like so many others she influenced in her community, is still operational today. Ms. Walker was an active volunteer and board member on a number of national and local organizations devoted to social services for low income families.

Ms. Walker proved that one person can truly make a difference in a world where small deeds and individual strength can be overlooked and underestimated. Clarissa serves as an inspiration to all of us and has shown us that one person's determination to help those in need can truly change the world and the way we live in it. Her spirit of gracious fortitude will be remembered in Minnesota, and I ask that we draw on her strength and struggles in the work that we do for the American people at large.

IN HONOR OF PRIVATE FIRST
CLASS ANDREW HARPER

HON. DAVID B. MCKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, this past week, all of West Virginia experienced a tremendous loss. 19-year-old Private First Class Andrew Harper died from injuries he sustained while serving our country in Afghanistan. It deeply saddens me to see anyone hurt while serving our country, let alone lose their life such as Private First Class Harper did. Andrew was a dedicated hero who defended our country with the utmost dignity and I am proud to call him a West Virginian.

Andrew, a graduate from University High School, was stationed in Kandahar province when he sustained his fatal injuries during a non-combat incident. This brave young man enrolled in the Army to protect our freedom and our country's fundamental beliefs. The true heroes of our time will be these brave men and women who have stood up for America and defended our freedom.

This young man who was from Maidsville, West Virginia served our country with pride and dignity. He represented our community in that same manner. The admiration our community felt for this young man and his service are immense. Andrew's passing has left so many shocked and distraught. This brave young man's life was so very promising. There is no question that Andrew left a great legacy and his memory should be honored.

Andrew serves as a great example of the American spirit. My thoughts and prayers are with Andrew's mother, Deanna Wells of Middleburg, Florida, his father, Steven Harper of Maidsville, West Virginia, his extended family, friends, and his entire unit, the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment as they continue to protect our freedom in Afghanistan.

AMERICAN HEALTH SECURITY ACT

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there should be a family doctor for every

American family. That shouldn't be hard in the richest country in the world, but it's not a reality for too many Americans. There is nothing worse than having to worry about how you are going to pay for something that you absolutely need like health care.

That is why for the past century, leaders from Teddy Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Bill Clinton to President Obama have tried to advance varying forms of comprehensive health care reform. At every opportunity conservatives have warned that ensuring comprehensive care would be the end of freedom and usher in a new era of socialism. Despite this alarmism, Medicare passed in 1965 and thank God for that. Seniors and others such as people suffering from diseases like End Stage Renal Disease have a low cost way of accessing high quality of care.

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) last year, the promise of more access and fairer rules are being realized for all Americans. We have more to do, though. There has been a lot of attention made towards the supposed lack of flexibility in the ACA. States argue, correctly in my view, that they are in the best position to evaluate and address the specific needs of their communities. The ACA gives states a great deal of flexibility, but some states believe they can build on it to do even more to expand access, lower costs and raise the quality of health care. For example, in Vermont, there is a grassroots movement that has swept into the State House to move the State of Vermont towards a single payer system.

The people in Vermont are fed up with insurance companies and want more progress. They think it's ridiculous and shameful for insurance companies to post their highest profit margins ever this year while also charging higher premiums to consumers.

The American Health Security Act I am introducing today would give states the ability to increase quality and get control of costs by taking out the profiteering middle-man—insurance companies—and letting doctors focus on what they do best: treat patients. I believe this bill builds on the ACA by offering states an excellent option in moving our country towards a health care system that finally puts the patient first.

TYLER MARTINEZ TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tyler Martinez of Alamosa, Colorado. Mr. Martinez earned the Youth of the Year award at the Boys and Girls Club of the San Luis Valley for the second year in a row.

It is rare to find a youth like Mr. Martinez who is so involved in helping less fortunate kids. The Alamosa High Junior lends his effort and time to the Boys and Girls Club, though. The fact that he was selected for the honor two consecutive years is a testament to his dedication. As a student and player on the Alamosa High basketball team, it is even more impressive that Mr. Martinez finds so much time to volunteer.

Mr. Martinez will once again enter the statewide competition for Colorado Youth of the

Year. He joins many deserving honorees across the state and will certainly be a serious contender. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Tyler Martinez, today, and I have no doubt this young man will continue to be a leader in his community.

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr Speaker, Happy St. Patrick's Day! Originally a religious holiday, today St. Patrick's Day is largely an international celebration of Irish culture. I urge my colleagues and fellow Americans to embrace this day. Today, one in four Americans traces at least part of their ancestry to Ireland. Irish-Americans have provided the backbone of our workforce, enlivened our art and culture, defended our country, and served in this Congress and as President of the United States. Great Irish-Americans such as Eugene O'Neill and F. Scott Fitzgerald transformed American literature, innovators like Henry Ford helped revolutionize American transportation, and who can forget Presidents like Andrew Jackson, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, each Irish-American alike. Irish-Americans continue to contribute to our nation as they ably serve in their communities in numerous capacities. It is for all of these reasons that I support the designation of March as Irish-American Heritage Month and encourage Americans to celebrate Irish-American heritage. I'm proud to stand today with my colleagues, those lucky enough to be Irish-American, as well as those who aren't, and honor this group that has been so important to our nation on this St. Patrick's Day.

INTRODUCING THE THRIFT SAVINGS FUND IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Thrift Savings Fund Improvement Act. This legislation expands the investment options available to congressional and other federal employees by creating a precious metals investment fund in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Adding a precious metals fund to the TSP will enhance the plan's ability to offer congressional employees a wide range of investment options that can provide financial security even during difficult economic conditions.

The Thrift Savings Plan is one of the most important benefits offered to Congressional employees. A strong TSP can obviously play a key role in attracting and retaining talented individuals to serve in the legislative branch. Adding a precious metals option will strengthen the TSP. In the last year, the price of gold rose by over 23 percent and silver by over 94 percent, while the Dow Jones and S&P 500 each only rose by around 8.5 percent.

Recent gains aside, precious metals have a number of features that make them a sound

part of a prudent investment strategy. In particular, inflation does not erode the value of precious metals is not eroded over time. Thus, precious metals can serve as a valuable "inflation hedge." Precious metals also maintain, or even increase, their value during times of stock market instability, such as what the country is currently experiencing. Thus, investments in precious metals can help ensure that an investment portfolio maintains its value during times of economic instability.

Federal employees could greatly benefit from the protection against inflation and economic downturns provided by prudent investments in precious metals. I therefore once again urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Thrift Savings Fund Improvement Act.

HONORING SERGEANT KRISTOPHER JAMES GOULD

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of Sergeant Kristopher James Gould of Frankenlust Township in Michigan. Kristopher paid the ultimate price in service to his country on February 27, 2011 in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Gould joined the Michigan Army National Guard in 2003. He served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006. He joined the US Army in 2007 and was serving his second tour of duty in Afghanistan when his unit was struck by an improvised explosive device. Kristopher was assigned to the B Company, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was a 2004 graduate of Valley Lutheran High School and his funeral was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 12th.

James and Ann Gould, Kristopher's parents, would like to thank the Casualty Assistance Officer, Sergeant Angelina Saldana, of the Michigan Army National Guard for her assistance during this time. She escorted them to Dover Air Force Base, and coordinated the military honors with the church. Mr. and Mrs. Gould were touched by her compassion and her support of the family during this time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to stand with me in a moment of silence and remember the life of Kristopher James Gould and the service he rendered to our country. His sacrifice for the United States of America cannot be measured, and we owe him our thanks and gratitude. Please join me in offering prayers and condolences to his parents, sister and family for their loss.

STEPHEN F. MESTAS TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief Warrant Officer Stephen F. Mestas of Pueblo, Colorado. Officer Mestas is a helicopter combat pilot who just finished his second tour of duty in Afghanistan, and his fifth tour overall. His return is a reminder of

the sacrifice our soldiers and their families make to ensure our freedoms.

Officer Mestas and his unit, Alpha Troop 2-17 Cavalry, were recently deployed into some of the most dangerous territory in the world. They put their lives in danger every day so that we may live safely and freely in America. The fact that officer Mestas has been deployed five times in that pursuit is both humbling and inspiring. We are truly indebted to these brave men.

I also feel profound respect for the wives, children, parents and siblings of our American soldiers. They are put through incredible difficulties and we owe them the same gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize Stephen Mestas, today. He and his family keep this country strong, along with all of the other men and women we charge with protecting the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR DAILY BREAD

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Our Daily Bread, and to congratulate them on their 26 years of service in the Northern Virginia community.

Our Daily Bread is a volunteer-based organization dedicated to providing critical services to families and individuals suffering from financial hardship. Through robust community support from local faith-based groups, community organizations, local businesses, schools and universities, Our Daily Bread has grown to provide food, financial literacy education and assistance, school supplies, and holiday cheer to thousands of people in our area.

Our Daily Bread's mission is to identify and address the unmet fundamental needs of Fairfax area residents, and to empower the community to help our neighbors maintain self-sufficiency. This mission of sustainability and self-sufficiency evolved from humble beginnings. Our Daily Bread was founded in 1984 as a temporary homeless shelter that rotated among several area churches. When Fairfax County opened a county-run shelter in the Reston area, Our Daily Bread refocused its energies on feeding the homeless and opened a soup kitchen to serve those most in need. Recognizing the difficulties faced by those patrons unable to benefit from this service, Our Daily Bread again reinvented itself first by delivering sandwiches made by volunteers and later to delivering supplemental groceries directly to homeless families who were living in motels along Route 50 in Fairfax.

Our Daily Bread has a history of being dynamic in the face of changing demographics. Beginning in the 1990's and largely fueled by the high cost of rental housing, a new urgent need emerged. Families who were not homeless, families in which one or both parents were often juggling multiple jobs, were finding themselves unable to meet their basic needs and were just one crisis away from homelessness. Our Daily Bread rose to meet this challenge and began a program offering emergency financial assistance in the form of a modest one time grant of up to \$350.00. More recently, Our Daily Bread expanded their services to provide financial mentoring, a back to