

Over the course of his career, Al helped fulfill President Abraham Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." While the V.A. loses a valued member of its team with Al's retirement, his impact on our nation's veterans will be felt for years.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending the career of Mr. Albert B. Washko as he begins his well-deserved retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE 2010–2011 CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR 500 HOURS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY—DALLAS RODRIGUEZ

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege to inform the Members of the United States House of Representatives that the students of the 2010–2011 Congressional Youth Advisory Council (CYAC) from the Third District of Texas have completed a total of 500 community service hours, fulfilling and far-surpassing the requirements of their assigned CYAC in the Community service project.

This year 46 students from public, private, and home schools in grades 10 through 12 made their voices heard by joining CYAC. As the Third District's young ambassadors to Congress, these bright high school students met with me on a quarterly basis to discuss current events and public policy. These impressive young people recognize an important truth: the heart of public service is found when giving back to the community. CYAC students volunteered their time and talents with over 30 organizations including Adopt-A-Highway, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Teen Court, and the USO, to name a few. As one student shared, "CYAC in the Community has allowed me to realize my calling to serve those in the U.S. Armed Forces." I am beyond thrilled that CYAC has helped students unleash their full potential and chase their dreams.

President George H.W. Bush once said, "A volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens—citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization."

With this statement as a benchmark, I am proud to congratulate the members of the 2010–2011 Congressional Youth Advisory Council for showing themselves to be outstanding young citizens of this nation. It is my privilege to submit summaries of their work to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to be preserved for posterity and antiquity. To these young public servants, thank you, and keep up the great work. I salute you.

A copy of each submitted student summary follows:

For this project I wanted to focus specifically on what I could do in five hours to make a difference in my community. I decided to focus my CYAC community service

on helping The North Texas Food Bank with their current event called "The Souper Bowl of Caring". This event is done in conjunction with local grocery stores and allows shoppers to buy pre-packed bags of non-perishable food items to donate for distribution to the local food banks and shelters. I walked my neighborhood distributing flyers informing people about the event and solicited cash donations to help me pre-purchase bags for the event. I was able to collect enough money to buy 23 bags of groceries. Because I will volunteer for the event on Sunday, February 6th, several others I talked to promised to go in to Market Street and purchase bags on Sunday. This experience has shown me how much one person in a short amount of time can help several families survive for a couple of weeks. It confirmed to me that we can all make a difference in the lives of others by just taking a few hours out of our lives and focusing on helping others.

—Dallas Rodriguez

IRENE PARSONS SHATTERED MANY GLASS CEILINGS IN HER YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Irene Parsons, of Wilkes County, North Carolina, who passed away last week.

Parsons was a woman who knew a thing or two about shattering glass ceilings. After she graduated from the Women's College of the University of North Carolina in 1941, she then went on to graduate with the first class of the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard, known as SPARS. She then served at the Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington.

After the war Parsons worked at the Veterans Administration. She was eventually appointed by President Johnson as director of personnel at the Veterans Administration. At the time, the VA was the second largest government agency with over 200,000 employees and Parsons was the only female director of personnel for a major government agency.

Later, in 1972, Parsons was honored with a Career Service Award from President Nixon for her many years of service to our nation. She was also the first woman to receive the VA's coveted Silver Helmet award. Parson's also received the Federal Women's Award during her service in the federal government.

After retirement from government service she returned to her home in Wilkes County where she remained very active in the community. Irene Parsons made many strides for women during a time in which men still filled most leadership roles in government and business. Her life is an inspiring example for today's generation of young female leaders. She will be greatly missed and my thoughts and prayers are with her family and loved ones who mourn this great loss.

PROTECTING OUR SENIORS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, Social Security and Medicare bring economic security within

reach of working American families, regardless of income. Workers deserve the benefits they are owed after a lifetime of paying into these programs.

And, yet, there are some, driven by blind ideology and partisanship, who aim to chip away at those guarantees, bit by bit. There are budget proposals—reducing the operating expenses for the Social Security program, and curtailing the ability of Social Security to pay benefits—that hint of a radical restructuring of the program. There are budget proposals that are unabashed in their radicalism toward Medicare.

In the name of fixing deficits in other areas of the budget, some will try to point fingers at seniors programs as the culprit, but don't you believe it. We must be extremely cautious and jealous in protecting Social Security and Medicare, or we may find that they will be taken away forever.

DENNIS MANN WILL BE MISSED

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, April 8th, the Town of Sharon and many others will be honoring Dennis Mann on the occasion of his retirement as the Fire Chief of Sharon, Massachusetts. Sharon is a town very well represented in this body—it has been, since 1982, in the district I am privileged to represent, and it is the hometown of my colleague from Massachusetts, Mr. KEATING, who served Sharon as a State Representative and State Senator before moving on to become the District Attorney for the county in which it is located and, most recently, our colleague here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, Dennis Mann exemplifies public service at its best, and at a time when too many people are prone to denigrate public servants, I am very proud to hold him up as an example of the kind of dedication, integrity, and commitment from which the public benefits. Dennis Mann has been a member of the Sharon Fire Department for over 30 years, and he was Chief for 13. In addition to the difficult job of running a fire department, with all that that entails, Dennis Mann's commitment to others has led him to teach CPR and also serve as an instructor in karate.

Mr. Speaker, we are as a society very lucky to have people who are prepared to risk their lives in the fire service, one of the most dangerous occupations in the world, and we too often take for granted the safety that they provide for us. I very much regret that there are those who would deny them the resources we need—and I say we and not they—for them to do their job on our behalf.

Mr. Speaker, to Dennis Mann, his wife Kathy, and their children Jamie and Carissa, I send my very best wishes; my congratulations on a job well done; and gratitude for the example Mr. Mann has set for public service at its best.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I missed rollcall vote No. 225 on H.R. 1246. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on this vote.

RECOGNIZING THE 2010-2011 CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR 500 HOURS OF OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY—ALEX ROBINSON

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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A copy of each submitted student summary follows:

Since I have been a competitive swimmer for over ten years, I thought that it would be a good idea to volunteer at the Plano Special Olympics Swim Team. Not only did I help these kids with their swimming, I made friendships that mean the world to the kids.

I worked for about three months with them, and most of my swimmers achieved their goal at the championship meet, which was a gold medal. One swimmer was constantly afraid of getting in the water, but I eventually got him to conquer his fear and jump into the pool. Often, especially at schools, the mentally challenged kids are written off and no one pays attention to them, but that is just wrong. These are some of the nicest people that you will ever meet, and they are especially eager to learn. Not only is this a great opportunity to make these kids better swimmers, it is a chance to make these kids feel like they fit in and it makes them feel very good about themselves. I was very apprehensive about volunteering at first, but it was one of the most rewarding decisions that I have ever made. The Special Olympics is often short on volunteers, and I really recommend volunteering.

—Alex Robinson

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Air Force Sergeants Association's 50th anniversary, which will be celebrated at its 2011 Professional Airmen's Conference and International Convention in San Antonio, July 23 through 27, 2011.

The Air Force Sergeants Association is a not-for-profit organization serving the professional and personal interests of its 110,000 association members, made up of active duty, veteran, and retired enlisted members of the Air Force, as well as the Air National Guard and Reserve. The AFSA advocates for 955,873 active duty and retired Airmen, whether they are an association member or not. Including family members, who also "serve," the number of enlisted "Airmen" represented by AFSA is huge. The association has an auxiliary to which family members of Air Force enlisted members can belong.

The association began in 1961, and has earned the respect of Congressional, Pentagon, and Veterans Affairs leaders for its relentless role as a voice of the Air Force enlisted. The association was instrumental in the establishment of the Survivor Benefit Plan for surviving spouses of retired veterans. They played a major role in the recent passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, a comprehensive overhaul of the previous education benefits that will ensure Air Force members and their families are provided with improved educational opportunities. The association has ensured that many military family issues have been brought to the forefront, including the need to construct additional child development centers for child care needs and the establishment of an oversight office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the Exceptional Family Members Program to better manage special needs across all military services.

The association also played a significant role to assure veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other Overseas Contingency Operations receive the proper and well-earned benefits, care, and treatment for their selfless and heroic service to a grateful nation.

At the vanguard of the effort to achieve cost-of-living adjustments for all those in uniform and those who have retired, the association was a main force in implementing TRICARE for Life medical benefits for retirees over 65 and the implementation of "concurrent receipt" of retirement and disability pay for disabled veterans, rated over 50% disabled.

Additionally, the Air Force Sergeants Association has been a reliable source of information for the legislative process in support of military members and their families.

This well-known and highly respected veteran's organization has been dedicated to serving the total Air Force enlisted corps and their families for 50 years. For 2011, they have adopted "The Air Force Sergeants Association—A Global Voice for over 50 years" as the theme for their Professional Airmen's Conference and AFSA International Convention. May the association continue its good work for many years to come.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION AND REFORM ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. RICK BERG

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 1, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 658) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal years 2011 through 2014, to streamline programs, create efficiencies, reduce waste, and improve aviation safety and capacity, to provide stable funding for the national aviation system, and for other purposes:

Mr. BERG. Mr. Chair, for eight years, Washington has failed to provide our nation with a long term and stable plan for our aviation infrastructure.

This bill will ensure the much-needed long-term stability and development of our nation's aviation infrastructure.

However, I'm incredibly concerned about the provision in this bill that would phase out Essential Air Service support.

EAS is critical in large states like my own. Rural regions rely on EAS support for vital air transportation. In North Dakota, airports like those in Jamestown and Devils Lake would not be able to provide critical air service without EAS support.

I've talked with North Dakotans, and I know how much they rely on access to air service. Numerous North Dakotans depend on air travel as an essential part of their jobs, and for many rural residents, driving in bad North Dakota weather to get to a larger airport simply isn't viable.

Eliminating EAS would have a significant, detrimental effect on my state and on North Dakotans' access to air service.

As we prioritize spending, we also must promote economic development and job creation. In areas like North Dakota, maintaining essential air service is critical for commerce—we want businesses to invest in our cities.

A Goodrich plant in Jamestown employs nearly 500 North Dakotans. They rely on local air service to do business—air service that would not be possible if essential air service support was phased out.