

Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. Turkey also celebrates May 19th as the birthday of Atatürk.

During his lifetime Atatürk was able to lift a country from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire and build a secular democratic nation located at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East. His reforms were widespread including political, social, legal, educational, and economic. Some were monumental such as abolishing the caliphate and the sultan, recognizing equal rights for men and women, adopting a new alphabet and adopting secular law. Atatürk had a vision for the country, one of a pro-western secular and democratic state in which the rule of law would prevail. He swiftly but steadily advanced toward that goal with the confidence of a born leader and the support of the Turkish nation.

Atatürk championed women's rights, and believed that education and scientific training was the key to advancement not only for the individual, but also for the country. During his tenure, women were encouraged to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and enter into politics.

The legacy of Atatürk is even more evident today, as the Arab Spring leads to dramatic changes in the Middle East and North Africa. There are lessons in Turkey's history which can be applied to the current situation around the world. With the right leadership and determination, democracy can take root and lay the foundations for a prosperous future in the region.

HONORING MAYOR JOHN
DESTEFANO, JR., 2011 RECIPIENT
OF THE TORCH OF LIBERTY
AWARD

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the Anti-Defamation League and the New Haven community in paying tribute to the outstanding work of this year's Torch of Liberty Award recipient, the Honorable John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor of New Haven, Connecticut. In the seventeen years since he was first sworn into office, Mayor DeStefano has worked tirelessly to improve our community and the quality of life for residents. It is that extraordinary spirit of public service that is honored with this prestigious tribute.

Our communities would not be the same without the efforts of individuals whose work truly benefits our families and neighborhoods. Each year, the Connecticut Anti-Defamation League presents the Torch of Liberty Award to an outstanding leader in the community, recognizing their unique commitment and dedication. Mayor DeStefano and his efforts to enrich the city of New Haven are a remarkable reflection of the true spirit of community service.

When Mayor DeStefano took office in 1994, the city of New Haven was facing challenges on multiple fronts. The crime rate had risen, the downtown business district was being eclipsed by the modern conveniences of mall shopping, the schools were in desperate need of modernization, and the individual neighborhoods had suffered the consequences of sub-

urban expansion. It was no small task to turn the city's reputation around and regain the promise and prosperity it had once held. Mayor DeStefano approached all of these issues with both enthusiasm and purpose.

During the Mayor's tenure, virtually every public school has been rebuilt under the Citywide School Construction Plan. Some of the key features of this program have supported universal pre-kindergarten, the largest inter-district enrollment and magnet school program in Connecticut, and college level lab and technology features. Mayor DeStefano brought the New Haven public school system into the modern era and has gone a long way in providing New Haven teachers and students with the technology and tools that they need to achieve academic success.

The Mayor focused his attention on rebuilding the relationships between the city and Yale University as well as the hospital and medical communities. By strengthening these partnerships and building on its successes, New Haven has emerged as a national center of life and bio science businesses and the city center has undergone a dramatic transformation into a mixed use community. The Mayor also worked to strengthen neighborhoods through managing housing stock to mixed income and use models, promoting commercial corridors as well as implementing street smart infrastructure and public improvements. In addition, the Mayor worked with local law enforcement on a new model of community policing which decentralized police management districts which has effectively transformed public safety in the community. With all of these efforts, it is no wonder that under Mayor DeStefano's tenure, New Haven has been recognized by the National Civic League as an "All America City" three times.

A lifelong resident of the city of New Haven, Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. has dedicated innumerable hours to finding solutions to our city's challenges and to improving the quality of life for all New Haven residents. His work and public service is a reflection of what the Torch of Liberty Award stands for and I am proud to join all of those gathered this evening in congratulating him on this very special honor. I am pleased to have this opportunity to wish him, his wife Kathy, and their two sons, Dan and Jim, all the best for many more years of health, happiness and success.

COMMENDING STAFF SERGEANT
DEANTE BROOKS AND HIS WORK
IN AFGHANISTAN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the courageous work of Air Force Staff Sergeant Deante Brooks in defending the Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. Sergeant Brooks deployed to Afghanistan in 2010 as part of the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. On May 19, 2010, Sergeant Brooks was performing a security sweep of the airfield's perimeter with a Security Forces teammate, along with their Marine comrades when they came under attack.

Sergeant Brooks heard a scream, and realized his wingman had been injured by a gre-

nade. He raced back to the base with the injured wingman, providing medical assistance along the way. After Sergeant Brooks placed the injured soldier in the care of emergency medical personnel, he returned to the fight and provided reinforcements that helped to secure the area.

I recently met Sergeant Brooks, and we talked about his heroic work in defending the airfield's perimeter. I was deeply honored to meet such a brave and admirable individual. I cannot imagine what our country would be like without individuals like Sergeant Brooks—he and his fellow soldiers deserve the praise of all Americans for their dedication and service in protecting our nation.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are forever indebted to the men and women in uniform for their courage, honor, dedication and hard work in serving our country. Staff Sergeant Deante Brooks exemplifies this spirit and is a true American hero.

IN RECOGNITION OF HILDA
GRIGORIAN

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Hilda Grigorian, a Glendale resident who has dedicated herself to helping those in need around the world, often in some of the most challenging and dangerous locations.

Hilda Grigorian was born and raised in Iran, and migrated to the United States in 1978 in pursuit of the American dream of education and career. Hilda achieved both of these goals—she obtained a bachelor's degree and MBA and is currently working toward her Ph.D. at Walden University. She also worked in the private sector for over two decades, focusing on international development.

Hilda began her international relief efforts with a trip to her motherland of Armenia, where she volunteered to help small businesses. After several visits to Armenia's rural villages, she established a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called Armenia Village Operation, which she started with her own funds and other private funding. The program implemented important projects in the rural villages of Armenia.

In 2005, Hilda traveled to Afghanistan to work with a USAID funded program to help vulnerable, widowed women with business planning and access to funds to regain their businesses which were destroyed by the Taliban. She then worked for UNDP in the youth development project. In 2008, she began working for USAID Afghanistan as a Field Program Officer, stationed in the Province of Nangarhar, which borders Pakistan. In 2009, she was transferred to the remote, rural Province of Ghor in western Afghanistan, where she helped people implement community development programs, created jobs through cash for work projects, and ensured a fair distribution of food to the people of Ghor.

Hilda's selfless dedication to the people of Afghanistan has immeasurably benefited some of the most at-risk people in the world, and has demonstrated the generous spirit of Americans toward those in crisis. She thrived in an environment that afforded her very basic living

conditions, with no luxuries or amenities we often take for granted.

I ask all Members to join me in thanking Hilda Grigorian for her unwavering commitment to the people of Armenia and Afghanistan and wish her well in all future endeavors.

NORTH POINT HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM CLASS 4A MARYLAND STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise and congratulate the North Point varsity basketball team on winning the Class 4A Maryland state finals. The narrow victory over Patterson High School on March 12th was not only a great achievement for the North Point Eagles but was the first time a Southern Maryland Athletic Conference team has taken the championship in 39 years.

This year's championship is the perfect ending to the perfect season. After months of training, practice, travel and games, the Eagles earned a number one seed and a home regional championship game against Glen Burnie. North Point put Glen Burnie to rest in one solid quarter, gaining a 29 to 6 lead from which Glen Burnie could not recover.

After 26 wins and no losses, North Point faced one last challenge—to beat Patterson High School in the state finals at the Comcast Center in College Park, Maryland. North Point took the lead early and then fell behind only to finish strong in dramatic fashion, triumphing by just 76 to 72 over their respectable opponents. The "epic Blast at Comcast" completed for a 27 and 0 record for these student-athletes, making them the only one in Maryland to have a perfect season.

Under the guidance of their coach, Jimmy Ball, this basketball team's strong defense made the difference. According to a recent news release, "North Point led by as much as 16 points but found themselves trailing Patterson 66-65 with 3:20 remaining. Senior Gerel Simmons scored seven points in the final two and a half minutes to seal the title. Sophomores Naim Muhammad, who recorded a double-double (20 points, 11 rebounds), and Marquis Wright, who scored nine points and dished out 12 assists, paced the Eagles defensive effort against a Patterson team that averaged more than 80 points a contest this year. Senior captain Devonte Thomas scored 10 points and collected eight rebounds while Simmons finished with 19 points."

Let me also honor the entire North Point High School community for they are an integral part of this team's victorious season. At every game the fans chant, in a unified voice, "We are North Point." As Principal Kim Hill has said, the motto declares that "We are many, but we are united as one." And as one team, one school, and one community they were able to accomplish victory. Congratulations to the North Point High School Eagles and the North Point Community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks regarding my absence from votes which occurred on May 12, 2011 and May 13, 2011 due to attending my son Hunter T. Wilson's Army commissioning and graduation in Industrial Engineering at Clemson University. Listed below is how I would have voted if I had been present.

Roll Number 315—Tsongas of Massachusetts Amendment No. 5—nay; roll Number 316—Brown of Florida Amendment No. 6—nay; roll Number 317—Thompson of California No. 7—nay; roll Number 318—Inslee of Washington No. 8—nay; roll Number 319—Motion to Recommit with Instructions, H.R. 1231, "Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act"—nay; roll Number 320—On Passage of H.R. 1231, "Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act"—aye; roll Number 321—H. Con. Res. 50, providing for adjournment of the House—aye.

Roll Number 322—H. Res. 264, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 754) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes—aye; roll Number 323—Mike Rogers of Michigan Amendment—aye; roll Number 324—Gibson of New York Amendment—aye; roll Number 325—Hinchey of New York Amendment—nay; roll Number 326—Carney of Delaware Amendment—nay; roll Number 327—Reed of New York Amendment—aye; roll Number 328—Motion to Recommit with Instructions, H.R. 754, the "Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011"—nay; roll Number 329—On Passage of H.R. 754, "Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011"—aye.

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS REGARDING H.R. 658

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit the following correspondence between Congresswoman MCMORRIS RODGERS, myself, and Chairman DAVE CAMP regarding the inclusion of language in the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill permitting tax-exempt bonds to be used to finance the purchase of fixed-wing aircraft for air ambulance services.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

March 14, 2011.

Hon. DAVE CAMP,
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CAMP: We write to request your support for the inclusion of language in the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill that would permit tax-exempt bonds to be used to finance the purchase of fixed-wing aircraft to provide air ambulance services.

Current tax law prevents states from using tax-exempt bonds to finance new fixed-wing air ambulances while tax-exempt bonds can be used for the acquisition of medical helicopters. Aircraft and helicopters are both important for emergency medical care.

While helicopters can be used to provide air ambulance services, airplanes are commonly a superior mode of emergency air transportation for critically ill patients in rural areas. In many instances, the use of helicopters for air ambulance services in rural areas is impractical because of the long distances that patients must be transported. Also, airplanes present the safest and fastest mode of transportation during inclement weather. Allowing states to use tax-exempt bonds to finance fixed wing aircraft used exclusively for emergency medical services in the same way they can for helicopters will allow for better emergency medical service in our rural communities and save more lives.

Thank you for considering bringing equality to the tax code for fixed-wing aircraft that provide air ambulance services.

Sincerely,

DOC HASTINGS.
CATHY MCMORRIS
RODGERS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 3, 2011.

Hon. DOC HASTINGS,
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN HASTINGS: Thank you very much for your recent letter regarding the provision in the Senate's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that would permit tax-exempt bonds to be used to finance the purchase of fixed-wing aircraft that provide air ambulance services.

I appreciate your leadership, as well as that of others such as Representative Dave Reichert, a Member of the Committee on Ways and Means, in bringing this issue to my attention. As we prepare to enter negotiations with the Senate on a final version of the FAA reauthorization legislation, I look forward to working with you and other interested Members to better understand this issue and to explore possible modifications to current law in this area.

Thank you again for your letter and interest.

Sincerely,

DAVE CAMP.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 3, 2011.

Hon. CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS,
Vice Chair, House Republican Conference, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN MCMORRIS RODGERS: Thank you very much for your recent letter regarding the provision in the Senate's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill that would permit tax-exempt bonds to be used to finance the purchase of fixed-wing aircraft that provide air ambulance services.

I appreciate your leadership, as well as that of others such as Representative Dave Reichert, a Member of the Committee on Ways and Means, in bringing this issue to my attention. As we prepare to enter negotiations with the Senate on a final version of the FAA reauthorization legislation, I look forward to working with you and other interested Members to better understand this issue and to explore possible modifications to current law in this area.

Thank you again for your letter and interest.

Sincerely,

DAVE CAMP.