

Congratulations to these latest inductees into the University of Arizona Hall of Fame.

As a UA alumnus, I am proud of my alma mater on many levels and I am thrilled to say, well done, Cats, for this incredible season. Continue to "Bear Down Arizona!"

HONORING MS. STEPHANIE  
STUCKEY BENFIELD

**HON. JOHN LEWIS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Representative Stephanie Stuckey Benfield upon her retirement from the Georgia General Assembly and to thank her for her fourteen years of service.

For years, Stephanie has valiantly fought for women's rights, the environment, and families. She has been a leader in the Democratic Party, an advocate for all Georgians, and a dear friend.

Born in Eastman, Georgia, Stephanie has always been an outdoors enthusiast. Her love for nature has translated into an active dedication to improving the environment and a commitment to clean water and air that grew stronger when her son was diagnosed with asthma.

Stephanie obtained both her undergraduate and law degree from the University of Georgia. While in office, she received several prestigious awards, including the Environmental Leadership Award by the Georgia Conservation Voters and the Georgia Urban Forest Council Award for Promoting Arbor Day in public schools. It goes without question that her most notable accomplishment, however, has been her impeccable and unwavering service and support to Georgians.

We all know how much Stephanie adores her husband, Robert H. Benfield, Jr., her son, Robert, and her daughter, Beverly. Although we will miss Stephanie's enthusiasm and infinite knowledge in the General Assembly, I applaud her for continuing to be a proponent of the environment. Upon the end of her term, she will be the full-time leader of GreenLaw, where she will maintain her pledge to prevent air and water pollution that endangers human health and degrades Georgia's natural resources.

Representative Benfield, we will miss you terribly; you leave enormous shoes to fill. Thank you for your 14 years of service and for always putting the people of Georgia first.

RESPA HOME WARRANTY  
CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, August 1, 2012*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2446, the RESPA Home Warranty Clarification Act.

This bill clarifies that the sale of home warranties cannot be considered a settlement service, and therefore cannot be governed under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, or RESPA.

Many individuals buying a home want to avoid the financial risk of having to pay for major repairs on major systems and appliances.

To reduce that risk and to get the peace of mind that comes with knowing they can help guard against the cost of significant repairs, home buyers often purchase a home warranty.

Many individuals selling a home find that providing a home warranty at their own cost can help facilitate a quicker sale at a higher price by reducing the risk of the unknown for potential buyers.

It is important to note that the purchase of the product is completely optional, and is not made mandatory by any financial institution or government sponsored enterprise during the home-buying process.

Recently, however, HUD erroneously issued an interpretive rule blocking real estate agents from receiving a modest fee when they recommend the product to their client upon the purchase of their new home.

As such, if this rule is allowed to stand, realtors would have no incentive to inform their clients about this product.

Consequently, first-time homebuyers, or low- and moderate income-families may not be made aware of this option, instead being forced to pay full price for the replacement of their home's most expensive appliances.

At a time when our economy is still struggling, we need to ensure that hard working American families are still allowed to gain access to financial products that they depend on.

That is why I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2446.

CONGRESS MUST CALL FOR A NATIONAL MONTH OF VOTER REGISTRATION

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, recent events have highlighted ongoing efforts to suppress the voting rights of American citizens. State representatives and political leaders in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Florida have made public admissions that their particular state laws were designed to put a dent in the democratic process.

In order to confront this assault on the right to vote, we are introducing a resolution, expressing the sense of Congress that the month of September be dedicated to ensuring that every eligible citizen is registered to vote in the United States, calling for a National Month of Voter Registration.

This resolution will call for a nation-wide focus to challenge voting age citizens around the country to register to vote and confirm the status of their voter registration.

The National Month of Voter Registration will encourage citizens to take action and mobilize voter education efforts and voter registration efforts across the country. Since the 2010 elections, misguided efforts in many states have led to the enactment of laws that could turn the clock back to pre-2008 levels of voter registration and voter turn-out. With no response, thousands of Americans may be subjected to state actions that are not in compliance with our federal voting standards and that harm the franchise.

This national focus will challenge civil rights groups, third party voter registration groups, and voting eligible citizens to take action to conduct the following:

Register to vote. With voter registration deadlines approaching, many citizens may face significant barriers if they wait until the final hours to register to vote.

Verify voting status. Every voting eligible citizen will be encouraged to verify their voting status by confirming their presence on the voter rolls, and confirming that their address and personal identifying information in hand matches what the state or local board of elections has on file. Many voters believe that their voting status and information is current, however, citizens in Tennessee and Florida have already found that voter purging is real and can impact the right to vote without a voter being aware.

Confirm polling place. Every voting eligible citizen will be encouraged to verify voting location before Election Day. Voters may find that their polling location has changed from prior elections.

Mr. Speaker, I have not seen such an assault on the right to vote since the civil rights movement. As I look back on where we have come from in this country, it seems to me that some of these state voting changes mirror the negative trends of Jim Crow in their effect to scale back voting rights.

For instance, last week, the Brennan Center released another report showing how new voter ID laws could impose serious financial burdens on eligible voters. If the right to vote is available to every American citizen, then why are states making it harder to exercise that right?

In addition, a second Judge in Wisconsin has deemed Wisconsin's strict voter ID law unconstitutional under the state's constitution. Litigants in the law suit found that the law created unnecessary hardships for minority voters who are less likely to possess a valid ID. On the other side of the argument, the state of Wisconsin argued that the law was going to help prevent voter fraud.

Some state lawmakers have raised the issue of voter fraud to justify strict voter ID requirements and other strict voting changes. However, they won't tell you that during the George W. Bush Administration's five year probe of voter fraud from 2002–2007, that Administration came up with scant evidence of widespread voter fraud.

In addition, they won't tell you the amount of voter fraud cases that have come out of states that have strict voter ID, because there are none. There were no cases of fraud in state of Indiana when the Supreme Court ruled on Indiana's voter ID law in Crawford v. Marion, and states like Pennsylvania, Florida, and Texas have publicly stated that there are no current cases of voter fraud being pursued in their states. Mr. Speaker, our voting rights are being threatened by the non-existent issue of voter fraud.

Therefore, if states are going to present their worst laws to impact the franchise, then the American people have to rise up and combat these laws with better practices.

During the National Month of Voter Registration, we encourage every American citizen to take back their right to vote. We will work with citizens to ensure that they register to vote, confirm their voting information is correct on the voting rolls, and verify that they know where to go to vote on Election Day.

It is a troubling thought that in 2012, the Congress has to rise up and introduce this bill to protect voting rights. Even though Reconstruction Era and the Civil Rights Movement are technically in America's past, the current threat against voting rights is just as real as in those days. We are proud to stand with the American people to protect the exercise of their voice in our democracy.

THE BERRIEN COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION 60TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Berrien Community Foundation's 60th anniversary of providing invaluable financial support to southwest Michigan.

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the Berrien Community Foundation after six decades of impeccable service to our community. Founded in 1952 by William Vawter and many conscientious business men and women, the Foundation has, been committed to finding innovative ways to invest charitable dollars to help residents of Berrien County. From grants to scholarships, the Berrien County Community Foundation has been working to educate our young people and prepare them to enter the workforce. Without that assistance, many students would not have the academic prospects they do today.

The Berrien Community Foundation represents the very best our district has to offer. Philanthropic individuals who desire to help deserving individuals reach their goals and meet their dreams are able to do so in a financially responsible way by collaborating with the Foundation. I have been very impressed by the Foundation's creative approach to making dollars go far to help individuals who just need a little help in moving forward with their aspirations. I continue to marvel at their dedication and good will and hope their work continues for many years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to again recognize the achievements and irreplaceable contributions the Foundation has provided to my district and look forward to their continuing efforts to make Berrien County a better place to live and work.

COMMEMORATING THE 75TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE COMPLETION  
OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Appalachian Trail's completion.

On the 18th of August, 1937, the last mile of the original Appalachian Trail (AT) was completed at Sugarloaf Mountain in Maine's Carabassett Valley. Although the idea of a super trail on the scale of the AT had been discussed for years, it was the vision and determination of Benton Mackaye and Myron Avery who truly gave the project life. The leg-

acy of the trail was not always secure however, with severe weather, the Great Depression, and World War II threatening its continuity. Fortunately, the tremendous efforts of trail enthusiasts, lead by Mainer Stanley Murray, launched a campaign to save the AT and preserve it for future generations.

Maine's Appalachian Trail Club will be hosting a 75th anniversary celebration of the AT's completion 75 years ago. Members of the Club, Maine's Appalachian Trail Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land, the High Peaks Alliance, the University of Maine, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy will be present. The event will be an opportunity to reflect on the beauty of the trail and honor the countless volunteers who have helped to sustain this national treasure throughout the years.

The enormous significance of the Appalachian Trail to the state cannot be overstated. Many of our local economies benefit from the thousands of hikers that are drawn to Maine every year along its paths. I am deeply proud to share in this celebration of Maine and American history.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in commemorating this momentous anniversary.

MARCH OF DIMES COMMEMORA-  
TIVE COIN ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, August 1, 2012*

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the March of Dimes Commemorative Coin Act.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor and to work with my colleague from Illinois, Mr. DOLD, to issue a commemorative coin honoring the 75th anniversary of the March of Dimes, based in my district in White Plains. Funds from the sale of the coins would be used to support the March of Dimes' vital work to ensure healthy pregnancies.

The March of Dimes has a long and proud history. President Franklin Roosevelt took the four billion dimes sent to him by Americans in the Great Depression and created the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. Later renamed the March of Dimes, the foundation was dedicated to supporting the care of thousands of Americans with polio, as well as supporting research into the prevention and treatment of the crippling disease.

The March of Dimes fulfilled President Roosevelt's dream of a polio-free nation by funding the development of polio vaccines, which led to its eradication in the United States and much of the world.

In the decades that followed, the organization helped stamp out rubella, pushed for Neonatal Intensive Care Units, promoted folic acid to prevent neural tube defects, and brought newborn screening to every American baby.

Today, the March of Dimes focuses on reducing prematurity. Every year, nearly half a million babies in the U.S. are born premature, the leading cause of newborn death. In my home state of New York, almost 600 infants are born preterm every week—representing 12.2% of all live births in the state.

The March of Dimes New York State Chapter has one goal—to help babies start life in

the healthiest way possible by helping moms-to-be learn to care for themselves before, during and after their pregnancy. The New York Chapter also partners with local medical groups and organizations to establish guidelines for how to care for pregnant women and premature infants.

Over four million babies will be born across the United States this year, and each and every one will benefit from the March of Dimes historic legacy of scientific breakthroughs—from the polio vaccine to newborn screening. The March of Dimes Commemorative Coin will help us reach the day when we celebrate a new scientific breakthrough: preventing premature birth.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the gentleman from Illinois, and I urge your support.

HONORING THE LIFE AND  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF GORE VIDAL

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight and remember the life of Gore Vidal, a celebrated American literary and cultural icon, who passed away this week at the age of 86. A writer famed for his acerbic wit, elegant style, tough-minded radical views, and versatile talent, Vidal's incredibly varied career boasted over 20 novels, in addition to memoirs, essays, plays, television dramas, and screenplays.

Vidal was impressively characterized by the inimitable and revered Christopher Hitchens as being a 20th century answer to Oscar Wilde, a tribute to Vidal's cleverness and eloquence. As British author Martin Amis said in praising Vidal, "he is learned, funny and exceptionally clear-sighted. Even his blind spots are illuminating."

In 2009, Vidal won the annual Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters from the National Book Foundation. Unlike many of his intellectual contemporaries, however, he saw his role as a public intellectual not as a sidelined observer, but rather as an active participant in democracy and public affairs, contributing frequently and prolifically to the American political debate.

This weekend, I will travel to New York to see a revival of his play "The Best Man," starring my fellow Memphian, Cybill Shephard. I ask everyone to join me honoring Gore Vidal for his many contributions. His was a life well lived.

INVEST IN A CLEAN ENERGY  
FUTURE!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced the Clean Energy Victory Bonds Act. (H.R. 6275) The purpose of this legislation is to invest in a clean energy future.

This legislation will allow all Americans to invest in new clean energy technologies that will create over 1.7 million competitive American