

in Washington, DC after accepting the Spirit of Hope Award in 2009, she remarked:

I keep getting thanked for something I shouldn't be getting thanked for . . . What I and my awesome group of volunteers do, we do it because it's the right thing to do. The men and women who put their life on the line every day for my freedom, for my grandkids to play safe in my backyard, they're the ones that deserve to be thanked.

It is hard to imagine that Laura had any free time in addition to her tireless work at MARB yet she always found time to serve the community in other ways. She worked with many aid agencies including the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Salvation Army, and was the longtime coordinator of Moreno Valley's Fourth of July Parade, the "Trees for Troops" campaign, and the Annual Family Day picnic at March Air Reserve Base for all the military services, including 500 Navy Reservists who drill at Navy Operational Support Center Moreno Valley.

Laura is survived by her husband Larry, daughter Laurice (Don) Souron, and two granddaughters, Loral Hite and Taylor Hite.

Laura will always be remembered for her incredible work ethic, generosity, contributions to the community and love of family. Her dedication to our men and women in uniform, family, and community is a testament to a life lived well and a legacy that will continue. I extend my condolences to Laura's family and friends; although Laura may be gone, the light and goodness she brought to the world remain and will never be forgotten.

WEST END BAPTIST CHURCH 120TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a legacy of faith in Virginia's Third Congressional District. This year, West End Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia is celebrating its 120th anniversary, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed institution and its contributions to the greater Hampton Roads community.

The story of West End Baptist Church begins on December 12, 1892, when Robert and Mary Herbert sold a piece of land forty feet by one hundred feet to Joshua Morris, Isaiah Dillard and John Seton, Trustees of West End Baptist Church, for \$75.00. It was recorded that the land be used solely for the purpose of building a church.

In 1901, the West End Baptist Church was up and running under the leadership of Pastor Linas. The fellowship began in the old Bates School House that was located where the Beau Brummell building now stands. After the death of Pastor Linas, Pastor Beverly Garner became his successor. He saw a need for a new sanctuary for his followers. The congregation began to build the new church at 2916 Shell Road. Unfortunately, Pastor Garner passed away before he could see his dream completed. However, the new church sanctuary was completed in 1903 under the leadership of Pastor Bray. After Pastor Bray's tenure, Pastor Hall was selected as the next leader and Pastor Atkins succeeded him.

In 1965, Rev. Hallie Richardson, Sr. became West End Baptist Church's leader. He served faithfully until September 1990. During his ministry, the membership flourished. Due to the growth in the congregation, there again was a need for a larger sanctuary. The first service in the new sanctuary at 2413 Shell Road took place in July 1982, and West End Baptist Church has remained there to this day.

Pastor Rufus Hill succeeded Pastor Richardson in September 1990, and he served until 1999. Guest ministers rendered services until April 2001. During this time, West End also saw its first woman, Edith Green, appointed to the Diaconate. Rev. James Gray was officially installed as Pastor on November 2, 2003 and served until 2007. Pastor Paul Sims was elected to serve as the 10th Pastor of West End Baptist Church in November 2008.

Over the years, the West End Baptist community has continued to grow and flourish. Its members have offered programs in the Youth Ministry, Outreach Ministry, Culinary Ministry and more. In addition to Sunday prayer, the church offers Wednesday Noon Prayer Assembly. The Church is home to numerous bands and choirs. The church has also organized many functions including Children's Church, new converts' and new members' orientation classes, a monthly Men's Fellowship Breakfast, hot meals for the hungry and an Annual Homecoming.

As West End Baptist Church gathers to celebrate this historic milestone, the church can truly remember its past, celebrate its present, and focus on its future as "the friendly church by the side of the road, in the heart of the community with the community at heart." I would like to congratulate Pastor Sims and all of the members of the West End Baptist Church on the occasion of their 120th Anniversary. I wish them many more years of dedicated service to the community.

THE "CONGRESSIONAL REPLACEMENT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ENERGY-RESTRICTING AND JOB-LIMITING OFFSHORE DRILLING PLAN" (H.R. 6082)

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, domestic oil production is at an 18 year high, and President Obama's "All of the Above" energy strategy has reduced our reliance on foreign oil from 57 percent of consumption during the last year of the Bush Administration to 45 percent today. We now have 50 percent more floating drilling rigs operating in the Gulf of Mexico than we did before the BP oil spill—and more rigs operating in the United States than the rest of the world combined. The Administration's existing 2012–2017 offshore drilling lease plan makes more than 75 percent of our offshore oil and gas resources available for drilling, and the Interior Department reports that oil and gas companies already possess 26 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico containing 18 billion barrels of oil that have yet to be developed.

Yet here we are for the eleventh time in the past eighteen months wasting valuable floor

time on another drill bill that has absolutely zero chance of becoming law when our nation's fiscal cliff looms, and Americans are looking to their government for effective leadership so we can accelerate economic growth and put people back to work. These fundamental defects are further compounded by the conspicuous absence of any safety or royalty reform in this legislation, and the majority's insistence on gutting environmental review for the additional lease sales this legislation requires—including lease sales off the mid-Atlantic coast as early as 2013.

I support the responsible development of our nation's oil and gas resources as part of a comprehensive "All of the Above" energy strategy that emphasizes a greater use of renewables, efficiency and other clean energy sources over time. The forced lease sales in this legislation do not constitute responsible development, and the "Oil Above All" strategy advanced by the majority in this legislation and throughout this Congress is ultimately a prescription for energy dependence and economic decline.

I urge a "no" vote.

HONORING THE TRADITION OF VETERANS DAY

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, honoring our veterans and their families for the sacrifices they have made to protect the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans is not only proper, but a privilege that should always be cherished.

On November 11, 2012, Birmingham, Alabama will mark its 65th consecutive year of serving as a national model for the commemoration of Veterans Day. Birmingham's Veterans Day ceremonies are the oldest and largest in our country. The legacy extends across generations.

Birmingham's reputation as "the cradle of National Veterans Day" first took root in the final months of World War II.

Originally, November 11 was recognized as Armistice Day to solemnly commemorate the end of World War I, which was supposedly the "war to end all wars."

Barely more than two decades later, America's soldiers would be again called to duty, this time to confront the gravest threat to individual freedom in world history.

As World War II ended with the defeat of the Axis powers, Birmingham's Raymond Weeks, a Navy veteran, began a new mission that would define the rest of his life: ensuring that the service and sacrifices of all of America's men and women in uniform would not be forgotten.

In 1945, the concept of a National Veterans Day became fixed in his mind. In 1946, he personally took a petition and a proposed program, "National Veterans Day 1947," urging the creation of a national holiday to honor all veterans to General Dwight Eisenhower, who was then the Army Chief of Staff. In 1954, then-President Eisenhower signed legislation formally establishing November 11 as Veterans Day.

In presenting the Presidential Citizens Medal to Raymond Weeks on Veterans Day

1982, President Reagan said, "Mr. Weeks has exemplified the finest traditions of American volunteerism by his unselfish service to his country. As director of the National Veterans Day Celebration in Birmingham for the past years, Raymond Weeks, a World War II veteran himself, has devoted his life to serving others, his community, the American veteran, and the Nation. He was the driving force behind the congressional action which in 1954 established this special holiday as a day to honor all America's veterans."

The tradition of respect and honor established by National Veterans Day in Birmingham would be ably carried on by Raymond Weeks' successor, Colonel Bill Voigt. To this pivotal position of community leadership, Colonel Voigt brought his experience from the Alabama Air National Guard and U.S. Air Force Reserves and a deep and abiding concern for our veterans. His dedication went above and beyond duty. New leadership has been tasked to continue this tradition.

As we look toward the 65th anniversary of America's first Veterans Day and to 2014, the 60th anniversary of the legal holiday, we can cast our vision. It is to continue to honor our veterans.

We would do well by restoring emphasis on General Eisenhower's request of Raymond Weeks in 1947 for Veterans Day to perpetuate world peace: "I wish you every success in your purpose of arousing all American citizens to the need for cooperating among ourselves to the utmost to achieve the greatest of all goals—assurance of enduring peace."

The history of Veterans Day is a lesson in character education that can be used to inspire students to learn "living history" from our veterans. Alabama teaches character traits daily, including those illuminated by the history of the founding of Veterans Day—patriotism, courage, perseverance, loyalty and citizenship. Raymond Weeks demonstrated these qualities in his pursuit of the creation of a National Veterans Day and stands as an example of good citizenship for all students and every generation.

The symmetry of service has been a powerful constant through the generations in Alabama.

As an example, recently a rededication was held for the Rainbow Viaduct Memorial in Birmingham, which commemorates the heroism of the 167th Alabama Infantry during World War I. At that same ceremony, members of the modern-day 167th Alabama National Guard were recognized as they prepared for deployment to Afghanistan. Almost a century apart, the challenges may be different but the ethos of service and duty remains the same.

It is important to remember both what we honor and who we honor on Veterans Day. We honor soldiers and their devotion to freedom, yes. But we reflect that these are people around us who have willingly and unselfishly served on our behalf: fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, grandparents, a favorite uncle or cousin, a high school buddy or college roommate, a best friend or a childhood playmate.

Some we have joyfully welcomed back from an assignment or waved at during a parade. Others we thank at their gravesite, shedding a tear in their memory. We thank them for their sacrifice, bravery, and patriotism. We forget none of them.

This is what inspires us as we prepare for the annual observance of Veterans Day this coming November, and it is what continues to motivate my native Birmingham to set the highest standard for honoring those who have preserved the precious gift of freedom for all of us.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEIGHBORWORKS HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER SACRAMENTO REGION

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center Sacramento Region and its employees as they celebrate their 25th anniversary. NeighborWorks is a nonprofit organization committed to improving the Sacramento community by increasing opportunities for families to purchase their own homes and preserving homeownership. I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring NeighborWorks Sacramento Region for their important contribution to the Sacramento community.

Originally founded in 1987, NeighborWorks has grown tremendously and now serves the entire Sacramento Region as well as parts of California's Central Valley. Lead by a committed board of directors and CEO Pam Canada, the devoted staff and partners of NeighborWorks continually work alongside local residents to improve Sacramento's neighborhoods, and make the dream of homeownership a reality for all. For 25 years, NeighborWorks has been successful in increasing homeownership, assisting first-time home buyers, and empowering residents through education and community engagement. It is my privilege to serve as an honorary member of their Board of Trustees, as it was the honor of my late husband, Congressman Robert T. Matsui too. I have enjoyed working with Pam, and always find her and her staff to be responsive to the needs of my constituents.

As our nation's foreclosure crisis continued this past year, the NeighborWorks Sacramento Region has counseled more than 19,800 customers on a variety of housing related issues including foreclosure prevention, refinancing and home purchasing. Through their 3 offices, they have prevented more than 400 foreclosures by helping these distressed homeowners acquire loan modifications, and assisted 2400 residents in purchasing affordable homes. In conjunction with the McGeorge School of Law, NeighborWorks has provided more than 670 customers with free legal services through the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program. Through their work, they have helped hundreds of families avoid homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center Sacramento Region on its 25th Anniversary. I am confident that the organization will continue to be a beacon for those seeking the American dream of homeownership. I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the excellence of the staff and of NeighborWorks Sacramento Region who commit their lives

and professional careers to the people of Sacramento.

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE 37TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, each year about this time I rise to recognize the wonderful young men and women who have contributed a substantial amount of work to my office. Members of Congress know well, perhaps better than most, how important it is to have such exceptional young men and women working towards our nation's future.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows or interns. They do amazing work for the constituents we are privileged to represent, and are a vital part of every aspect of this establishment.

Although the United States has experienced some hard times in recent years, I simply have to look to the eager and idealistic young staff members and interns in my office to know the future of our country is bright and our best days lay ahead.

These are the people who toil in obscurity, but who willingly and happily jump at every task they are given because they know they are serving a great purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than serving your country. That is why I ran for public office. When I was six years old I dreamed of becoming a public servant when I grew up so I could help others. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

This rings true for a number of great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my office. Their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated and I wish to acknowledge them. They are: Ashley Guill, Ashley Bobo, Aliya Wishner, Quentin Scott, Anna Bartels, Tara Karoian, Lilit Rostomyan, Amanda Osborne, Monique Morgan, Sarah Birk and Francisco Guerra.

Mr. Speaker, the infusion of energy, intelligence, and idealism young people bring to their internships in my office and those of my colleagues helps keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

This is why I am so optimistic about our country's prospects for the future. As Margaret Mead said:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

These particular young people I have had the honor of getting to know have displayed extraordinary talent, quality, commitment and energy in their time in Washington. Their initiative and drive have shown me that in time,