

NATIONAL INFANT MORTALITY  
AWARENESS MONTH

**HON. DONNA F. EDWARDS**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, September is National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, established to highlight the tragedy of infant deaths across the nation and to raise awareness about programs that help save young lives and ensure our children are healthy. Infant mortality, the rate at which babies die before their first birthday per 1,000 live births, continues to be a key measure of the nation's health and a worldwide indicator of health status and social well-being.

Although the overall infant mortality rate (IMR) in the United States steadily declined for several decades, it has leveled off in recent years. Preliminary data indicate that infant mortality rate in this nation declined very slightly to 6.14 in 2010.

Unfortunately, this rate continues to be higher than the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average and that of most European countries. While modest improvements in the infant mortality rate, along with a national and local focus on preconception health for women of child-bearing age, provide welcome changes, much work remains to be done.

In Maryland, infant mortality continues to impact women and families at startling rates. For the second year in a row, the infant mortality rate in Maryland remained at 6.7. Though a drop from the 7.2 rate of 2009, the number of infant deaths in the state remains high. Of greater concern, is the disproportionate impact infant mortality has on some communities.

In 2011, the infant mortality rate for Prince George's County was 9.5, while in neighboring Montgomery County, the rate stood at 5.3. Though both counties have made significant progress in reducing infant mortality in recent years, our collective attention must continue to focus on making further gains. Of the state's five regions, the National Capital Area, comprising Prince George's and Montgomery counties, had the second-highest rate of infant deaths. Only the Eastern Shore Area experienced a higher rate at 8.9.

Across our nation, African American communities experience more than double the rate of infant mortality compared to other populations. In Maryland, the infant mortality rate among African Americans last year was 12.0, fully three times the rate among white infants. Despite efforts to address this disturbing gap, high rates of loss occur among African Americans of all income and education levels.

National Infant Mortality Month gives us an opportunity to raise public awareness and to educate women about ways they may reduce infant mortality. With good preconception health, as well as access to good health care during the mother's pregnancy and the early years of the child's life, women can work to lower the incidence of infant mortality. Research indicates that a number of federal programs may reduce the IMR. Programs such as the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and Healthy Start are vital programs tasked with bringing awareness to factors that contribute to the nation's high IMR, including low birth weight, congenital abnormalities, and sudden infant death syndrome.

With the support of local organizations and services offered in the 4th Congressional District of Maryland, including the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and the Suitland Health and Wellness Center, we can advance a number of strategies to reduce infant mortality and help mothers and children live long and healthy lives.

I will continue to support and bring awareness to programs that increase access to health care and improve the quality of prenatal and newborn care to prevent the causes of infant mortality. As our nation recovers from these difficult economic times and families may experience gaps in health coverage due to job loss or financial instability, it is especially vital that we continue to support adequate funding for these programs. We need to ensure that our babies get a healthy start and are able to celebrate their first birthday and a lifetime of birthdays.

HONORING DOUGLAS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. SILVESTRE REYES**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the achievements of Douglas Elementary School. Douglas was recently honored with the 2012 National Blue Ribbon award from the United States Department of Education for excellence in education.

The National Blue Ribbon School award honors both public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve at high levels and also schools where the achievement gap is narrowing. Since 1982, more than 6,700 of America's schools have received this coveted award.

I want to personally congratulate the teachers, administrators, and staff of Douglas Elementary School for their commitment and dedication to our young students in El Paso. This year only 269 schools nationwide received the award, and all will be honored in a ceremony in Washington, DC. The Blue Ribbon validates the efforts of these schools in creating a positive and effective learning environment. These schools and their communities have achieved a degree of excellence of which they can justifiably be proud.

Douglas is a fine example of what can be accomplished when parents, teachers and administrators collaborate to prepare our students for a prosperous future. By emphasizing the importance of literacy, math, and science, Douglas is enabling a new generation of community leaders.

In times of economic uncertainty, we cannot lose sight of the paramount importance of our children's education, and I am honored to represent Douglas Elementary School.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUT-  
STANDING WORK OF OUTLOOK  
NEBRASKA, INC.

**HON. LEE TERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize—Outlook Nebraska, Incorporated—an organization that I've had the pleasure of visiting and seeing firsthand the positive impact they have in the lives of so many. This organization is part of the AbilityOne Program, which enables more than 50,000 Americans and 3,300 wounded warriors nationwide, who are blinded or severely disabled, to work and provide products and services to federal and commercial customers.

Today in America, seventy percent of blind and visually impaired working-aged adults are not employed. Opportunities provided by Outlook Nebraska and the AbilityOne Program have played an important role in bringing people with disabilities into the workforce. As one of Outlook's employees said to me, "They looked at me for my abilities—not my disability."

The AbilityOne Program affords Americans who are blind or disabled the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence and a better quality of life. I applaud Outlook Nebraska and the work it does each day to open doors of opportunity for Americans who are blind or disabled.

A TRIBUTE TO HIS HONOR JUDGE  
MICHAEL T. McSPADDEN—TEXAS  
JUDGE

**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of individuals who make it their life's work to make communities safer while holding criminals accountable for their actions. One of the best is Judge Michael T. McSpadden. I have known Judge McSpadden for what seems like forever. We served in the district attorney's office as prosecutors together. Judge McSpadden prosecuted criminals for 8 years in the Harris County district attorney's office under the leadership of District Attorney Carol Vance.

In 1982, Judge McSpadden became a Criminal District Court Judge in Harris County, Texas. He tried felony cases. Judges in Texas are elected on a partisan ballot and Judge McSpadden has been elected 8 consecutive times to the bench of the 209th Criminal District Court. We served as judges together and I witnessed his remarkable dedication to the law and justice. As a community, we are truly privileged to have such an extraordinary man answer the call to public service and as an individual, I am grateful to call Judge McSpadden a friend.

Judge McSpadden has served the citizens of Harris County, Texas for over 35 years. A graduate from the University of Oklahoma (though we don't hold it against him), he has worked diligently to rise through the ranks in

Texas courts. He started his legal career in the Harris County District Attorney's office as an Assistant District Attorney, and then he became the Chief Prosecutor of the 209th District Court.

In 1982, Judge McSpadden was elected as a judge for the same court and, for the last 30 years, he has continued to preside over the 209th. His extensive knowledge of the justice system and his incredible work ethic have gained the respect of many in the law profession. Over his career, he has earned the respect and admiration among lawyers and judges within the legal community: he is always among the highest rated judges by members of the Houston Bar Association and was the highest rated judge in Harris County in the 2011 Houston Bar Association Judicial Qualification Poll. Our community has benefited greatly from the many, many years of service that he has dedicated. In addition, Judge McSpadden has been recognized by the Houston Police Officer's Association and Harris County Deputy Sheriff's Association. He has also been honored and named Champion of Crime Stoppers by the Bay Area Crime Stoppers. These organizations recognized that he has not only dedicated his professional time to helping others, but he has dedicated his personal time to helping the next generation as well. In 1994, Child Advocates honored him for his efforts to help children. He has been also honored by the Samaritan Center and the Assistance League of Houston for his work with inner city youth. Judge McSpadden is a positive mentor to young males at risk. In 2002, he was the first recipient of the Chuck Norris Team Spirit Award for his work with Kick Drugs Out of America. He continues to serve on the advisory boards of many non-profit organizations. By giving his time and lending his hands, Judge McSpadden has changed many lives, and I want you to know that our Nation is a better place because of his commitment to helping our communities become safer.

Prior to his three decades of public service in the courtroom, Judge McSpadden also served his country as a United States Marine. While enlisted, he even found time to win the Marine Corps Tennis Champion title. He is a 3-time Big 8 Conference Tennis Singles Champion and still enjoys playing at River Oaks Country Club.

The impact of Judge McSpadden's work is far reaching. He truly is an unsung hero whose efforts are felt in communities, neighborhoods and homes across Texas each and every day.

Judge McSpadden's achievements at the 209th and in the community far surpass these recognitions. His innovation, determination and compassion for serving others make him one of the best judges in the Nation. Judge McSpadden is a close personal friend, excellent lawyer, tremendous judge, and amazing public servant for Texas.

And that's just the way it is.

#### TRIBUTE TO ANGI CORROTHERS

### HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, Angi Corrothers is retiring from public service after 32 years of

dedication to the constituents of the 9th Congressional District of North Carolina.

She has been a valuable asset to my staff, and to the staffs of both Congressman Alex McMillan and Congressman Jim Martin before me. She truly exemplifies what it means to be a public servant.

She has spent many years patiently guiding constituents through the process of getting the benefits that they deserve. But it's through Angi's compassion and kindness that she helps anyone who needs it and gives of herself without a second thought.

Angi has truly been a delight to work with for these past several years. She has a great sense of humor, and we will miss hearing her stories and her wonderful, heartfelt laugh.

She will be greatly missed by myself, her colleagues, and the countless constituents that she helps, and we wish her well as she enjoys a well-deserved retirement.

#### HONORING OPERATION HELPING HAND

### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Operation Helping Hand. Operation Helping Hand was started in May 2004 as a project of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA, with the primary mission to support and assist military patients being treated at the James A. Haley VA Hospital and their visiting families. It was noted that some of the families visiting their wounded, sick, and injured active duty military patients were unable to pay for motels, and were sleeping in their cars. That proved to be enough justification to offer necessary services.

Over the course of eight years, Operation Helping Hand has helped over 750 of our active duty military wounded and injured, and countless family members, assisting with their personal needs while in Tampa, helping with the family's mortgage and bills back home, or whatever the service member or family needed to allow their primary focus to remain on healing, whether it be in Tampa or back home where the family resides.

Aside from responding from their daily needs, Operation Helping Hand sponsors Bronze Star, Purple Heart and other medal or retirement ceremony receptions and hosts a monthly dinner for the patients that is attended by an average of 250–300 people. These monthly dinners honor our wounded and injured active duty military patients who are given proper recognition, and flowers and gifts at each monthly dinner.

In October 2012, the 100th consecutive monthly dinner will be held. By its stated mission, Operation Helping Hand will continue to do all possible to aid the Tampa patients and their families as long as their services are required.

Operation Helping Hand's efforts to improve the quality of life for severely injured services members is truly inspiring. It is with great honor that I rise today to recognize their tireless commitment to those who have served our country. I look forward to watching this organization grow and further its mission of as-

sisting and supporting the families of injured service members.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. NIKI TSONGAS

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes on the day of September 19, 2012 because I was unavoidably detained back in my District. Had I been present, I would have voted for H.R. 5044, the Andrew P. Carpenter Tax Act. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I recognize the sacrifices made by our nation's servicemembers. It is appropriate and fair that when the student loan debt of a fallen servicemember is forgiven, his or her family members should not be hit with an income tax bill on that debt forgiveness. H.R. 5044 is a small step toward honoring their service and ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation, and I support it.

#### THE DOCUMENT

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on a spring day, 55 men walked from a cobblestone street into the Pennsylvania state house. They had important business to discuss, and guards kept watch to keep any curious people at bay. The men, all respected, half university-educated, had an average age of 42 years old. The youngest was a mere 27. In their first order of business, they formally nominated one man to be their leader: General George Washington.

This was the scene 225 years ago when our Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia. The 13 colonies had declared and won independence from King George, and were operating under a "league of friendship" or the Articles of Confederation. They knew that the fledgling nation was tinkering on failure: it could not regulate commerce between the states, raise revenue, or support a national defense. A few months before, a man named Daniel Shays had led a group of farmers, who wore hats adorned with twigs, to rebel in Massachusetts. The new nation had some trouble spots of anarchy. Something had to be done.

Over the next few days, the men debated in secret. There was no transparency, no reporters and no visitors. Men from large states, like Edmund Randolph of Virginia, argued for a strong national government, while men from smaller states, like William Patterson of New Jersey, balked at this. Alexander Hamilton of New York tried to convince his colleagues to follow the British government—"the best in the world"—a mistake to a group of proud patriots who had just defeated King George III. Their differing ideas led to compromises and a new government. Largely influenced by James Madison, credited as the Father of the Constitution, a Constitution was written that established three separate branches of government on the federal level, a decentralized national government with enumerated powers and individual state governments empowered with