

colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Due to his assiduous work ethic and natural leadership, Commissioner Conner quickly rose through the ranks of the Florida House of Representatives. In 1957, at the age of only 28, Commissioner Conner was elected as the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, becoming the youngest Speaker in the state's history—a record that still stands today. While serving as Speaker, he helped craft legislation to promote and advance Florida's agricultural industry, including the landmark Green Belt Law. He also worked to establish first-class agricultural labs to help eradicate numerous diseases and predators and pave the way for the further development of the Florida agricultural industry.

In 1960, after serving 10 years in the Florida House of Representatives, Commissioner Conner was elected as the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, a position that he held until his retirement in 1991. Commissioner Conner brought his vast experience as both a farmer and a legislator to his new role and helped expand Florida's output from \$900 million in 1960 to more than \$6 billion at the time of his departure in 1991. Commissioner Conner was a tireless worker, who traveled around the world to promote Florida agriculture and open new markets for Florida's farmers. He also expanded on his earlier legislative efforts to combat diseases, and under his leadership, Florida established a method for detecting the Mediterranean fruit fly which became the worldwide standard.

His excellence and leadership in Florida was recognized nationally, and he was even asked by President Kennedy to move to Washington to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture. After thanking the President for his offer, Commissioner Conner respectfully informed him that he wanted to keep his family in Florida and continue serving the state he so deeply loved. For his service to the agricultural industry, he was presented with numerous awards and recognitions. He was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame, Florida Citrus Hall of Fame, the Florida 4-H Hall of Fame, and the Florida FAA Hall of Fame.

Commissioner Conner also had an unwavering commitment to educating young people to help advance Florida's agricultural sector. He maintained a life-long relationship with his alma mater, serving as the president of the University of Florida National Alumni Association, and in 1972, he received the Distinguished Alumni Award. Today, the University of Florida maintains a scholarship in Commissioner Conner's name, which is awarded to students throughout Florida who display leadership in FFA and 4-H.

Commissioner Conner served as a mentor to numerous individuals throughout his career. My wife Vicki and I both had the distinct privilege and honor of working for and learning from Commissioner Conner. His leadership and commitment to Florida helped inspire me and numerous others to pursue public service. His contribution to the state of Florida and our nation cannot be overstated, and his legacy will continue to inspire Floridians for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress I am honored to recognize the life and service of a great man, Commissioner Doyle Conner. His contribution to Florida will never be forgotten. Vicki and I extend our most heartfelt condolences to the entire Conner family.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, on December 17, 2012, I was attending to a sick friend and comforting his family and was unable to vote on rollcall vote 627.

If present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 4606.

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it's the most wonderful time of the year. Next week, Americans throughout the fruited plain will come together and pause from the bustle of their everyday lives to celebrate Christmas with the ones they love. To Christians, Christmas is the day to honor the birth of Jesus. The word "Christmas" actually comes from the words "Cristes Maesse," which literally translates to Christ's Mass. The word "holiday" derives its meaning from the words "Holy Day". It also means Grandma's apple pie, Christmas carols, wreaths, cookies, Santa, presents, ornate Christmas trees and other rich traditions that symbolize December 25th.

In the midst of the holiday cheer, we should never forget that some families will have an empty chair at their Christmas dinner this year. For some homes, the empty chair represents a loved one who is serving overseas. For others, the chair is a somber reminder of the warrior who served but never returned. As you celebrate the season within the warmth of your home, think of the families without a full house and the sacrifices they make not just at Christmas time but the other 364 days of the year as well. These families bear the burdens of war, and these burdens weigh heaviest during this time of year.

War at Christmas is not new, and this year will be no exception for those who are still on call serving America. But there is a special way to connect with our troops throughout the world. Each year in Southeast Texas, children and businesses in the community come together and volunteer to make handmade cards for our troops who won't be home for Christmas. It began when my office gathered dozens of cards for me to bring in my suitcase to visit NATO troops overseas. Then we teamed up with Operation Interdependence and the Red Cross to collect 6,000 cards. And every year since it has grown. This year a record-shattering 69,000 handmade cards from the community are on their way overseas. The cards come from all walks of life in the community from the third grader to the local business employee. Each card is different but their message is the same: Thank you. Texans are especially grateful during this time of year for that soldier, that warrior, that sailor, that airman who can't be with their families because they're representing the United States in lands far, far away. There is something about a warrior from the United States

opening up a handmade Christmas card from some kid in the United States. At that moment, the darkness of war seems to disappear because of the brightness of a child.

No matter what is going on in the rest of the world, the Christmas spirit of good will and generosity is alive and well in America. Random acts of kindness are seen throughout the nation whether it is a handmade holiday card, a charitable donation to a stranger to ensure that families get to eat a Christmas dinner or a toy drive for children who may not otherwise get to experience the joy of giving and receiving. Christmas really does bring out the best in America.

So next week pause. Eat Grandma's cookies, sing Christmas carols, open presents and enjoy your loved ones. Think of those who have an empty seat at the table this year because their husband, wife, son, daughter, mother or father is serving our country in lands far far away. And don't forget the reason for the season, the birth of Jesus that occurred over 2,000 years ago. Wish your neighbor a Merry Christmas, and be thankful that you live in a nation where you can.

And that's just the way it is.

IN TRIBUTE TO THOMAS AND ESTHER WACHTELL

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to my good friends, Thomas and Esther Wachtell, patriots, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and community volunteers.

Tom and Esther own and operate Oak Knoll Ranch in Ojai, California. They produce and ship apples from their 10-acre orchard but more importantly, the ranch is their base for their many other efforts.

Tom and Esther both have had storied careers. Tom was a Navy lieutenant commander in the Office of Naval Intelligence, executive vice-president of Occidental Petroleum Corporation in Los Angeles, president of Merrit Energy in Los Angeles, an investor/consultant for Gulf Exploration in Covington, Louisiana, and, with Esther, co-proprietor of Eve's Apples in Ojai.

Esther is president of The Wachtell Group, a fundraising consulting company specializing in large capital campaigns. In addition, she was executive vice-president and president of The Music Center of Los Angeles, an investor with her husband in Gulf Exploration, and co-proprietor of Eve's Apples.

The lists of their community involvements are even longer. Tom's list includes founder/president of the Los Angeles Opera, director of the Performing Arts Council of The Music Center of Los Angeles, director of the World Trade Center in Los Angeles, director of the Good Hope Foundation in Los Angeles, a Republican Eagle, and a member of the Romney Finance Committee.

Esther's list includes founder/chair of the Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy at USC, trustee for Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, director of the Museum of Ventura County in Ventura, California, president of the Ojai Music Festival in Ojai; director of the Libbey Bowl Foundation in Ojai, and director for Ojai Community Bank.

Beneficiaries of their large philanthropic grants include Children's Hospital, Choate School, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library, the Music Center Opera, the Music Center of Los Angeles County, and the Republican Party.

In addition, Esther served as development chair for the Museum of Ventura County, raising \$7.5 million for the museum, and for Children's Hospital, raising more than \$1 billion, a record for the hospital. She also helped raise \$4 million to rebuild the Libbey Bowl as president of the Ojai Music Festival.

Both list their greatest accomplishment as raising three happy and successful children who are married to three wonderful spouses and who have given them 12 fantastic grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join my wife, Janice, and me in paying tribute to our close friends Tom and Esther Wachtell, for their patriotism, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy, which has made our nation stronger politically and economically and made our world a better place to live.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DR.
LINDA J. HEWETT

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Linda J. Hewett as she celebrates her retirement as co-director of the University of California San Francisco (UCSF), Fresno Alzheimer's and Memory Center (AMC).

Dr. Hewett's lifelong dedication for assisting California's most vulnerable citizens began when she earned her nursing degree in 1968 from the Westminster Hospital in London, where she specialized in maternal and child health. In 1990, she received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University.

Dr. Hewett's passion for ensuring that people of all ages live a quality life led her to specialize in neuropsychology. After finishing her pre-doctorate work at Rancho Los Amigos Hospital and post doctorate at UCSF, Fresno AMC, she became the co-director of AMC in 1994. Dr. Hewett began as the Assistant Clinical Professor for the departments of Neurology, Family & Community Medicine, UCSF Medical School, Fresno Medical Education Program, and will retire as an Associate Professor for UCSF. In addition, Dr. Hewett has worked as the Senior Neuropsychologist at AMC since 2004, and from 2001–2003, she was the Director of the Gerontology Program at California State University, Fresno.

Dr. Hewett has served in many capacities over the past few decades. Because of her efforts to educate and spread awareness about Alzheimer's disease she has become a true champion for our Central Valley. Dr. Hewett's expertise is sought out from people all over the state and country. Due to her work with the California State Legislature, there are more Alzheimer's Research Centers that have provided invaluable resources for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

Thousands of families have been fortunate to receive the benefits of Dr. Hewett's care.

Her overwhelming knowledge and compassion is comforting to her patients and their families. I had the privilege to see Dr. Hewett's work firsthand as she personally treated peo-

ple very close to my heart. She made them feel comfortable and at ease, and I will always be grateful for the expertise and kindness that she provided to them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Linda J. Hewett for her service, compassion, and devotion to bettering the lives of others. We thank Dr. Hewett today for her outstanding contributions to the San Joaquin Valley and to the State of California.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2012 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's Report.