

what is perhaps the greatest Democracy to ever exist. By compromising, by understanding not only their own personal beliefs, but the beliefs of those opposed to them, congressmen and presidents inspire the people they represent to become involved in the American process because their electors believe that the system does work; that the system can solve serious problems without mindless bickering over irrelevant issues. There exist a social bond between electors and the elected in America: when the elected rise above politics and become statesmen, Americans will rise as well. When the elected fall, so too does the will of Americans to participate.

CONGRATULATING THE MY POSSIBILITIES HIPSTORE: OPEN FOR BUSINESS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to recognize the great staff, board of directors, and Hugely Important People—or HIPsters—of My Possibilities in Plano, Texas as they celebrate the organization's newest venture, the HIPstore.

My Possibilities is a non-profit organization that provides daytime, year-round vocational training and other programs for adults with special needs. The first organization of its kind in Collin County, My Possibilities opened its doors in June of 2008 when caring moms joined forces to create a safe, social atmosphere for young adults who had “aged out” of secondary education. Today, ten full-time staff members serve 125 HIPsters each week.

Inspired by the My Possibilities motto, staff and HIPsters alike work hard to “Make every day count.” The new HIPstore provides a great enterprise opportunity to do just that.

The store is a 3,000 square-foot facility that features gift items like candles, jewelry, and artwork all handmade by HIPsters. The HIPsters not only learn creative skills, put them into practice, and watch their handiwork make a profit, but learn the ins and outs of operating a retail outlet. For instance, they help to stock the shelves, monitor inventory, interact with customers, and operate the cash register.

To the folks whose hard work and forward thinking have made the HIPstore possible:

Thank you for your efforts. It is my pleasure to join you in celebrating this exciting new chapter of My Possibilities' service to the North Texas community. I'm glad to help announce that the HIPstore is “open for business!”

RECOGNITION OF IDA MAE BYRD

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor Ms. Ida Mae Byrd. A native of Waycross, Georgia, Ms. Byrd has enjoyed a very active life looking after her family and her community. We celebrate your 100th birthday.

Ms. Byrd was born to Maebelle and Jack Smith in Waycross, Georgia, on March 13,

1912. She is the third of six children. At the young age of 16, Ms. Byrd was looking for more opportunities so she moved to Brooklyn, New York. Once in New York City, Ms. Byrd worked diligently to bring her immediate family with her.

At the age of 19, Ms. Byrd married Wily Byrd, forming a strong union that produced five children. The family was a close knit group held together by her strict control and discipline. She set an example for her siblings on how to properly raise children—supporting a strict environment with a loving and warm personality.

In her younger days, Ms. Byrd loved to dance and one of her favorite places to dance was the Savoy Manor in the Bronx. Along with dancing, Ms. Byrd enjoyed her occasional Miller High Life beer and her beloved New York Mets. As an avid fan, she was rewarded with two World Series championships. Through the years she was an active member of Pilgrim Baptist Church under the leadership of Bishop Roy E. Brown. Ms. Byrd enjoyed these church events most with her family who attempted to make every moment a memorable one.

Ms. Byrd has lived through an incredible century that has witnessed two World Wars, the Jim Crow South, the invention of the television and the computer, and the Civil Rights movement. She has also lived to see apartheid end in South Africa and the election of the first African American President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ms. Ida Mae Byrd on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLORA-BAMA AND GULF COAST RESIDENTS SUPPORT OF NEW YORK CITY AND HARLEM AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 10th Anniversary of the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast support of New York City and Harlem after September 11, 2001.

In 2002, Joe Gilchrist, owner of the Flora-Bama Lounge in Pensacola, Florida brought to New York a group of more than 100 visitors, including musicians and songwriters, to pay respect to the ground zero site and support New York. Gilchrist also encouraged the group to spend money to help uplift New York City's economy and provide moral and spiritual support to the victim's families. The group also toured New York City fire houses, the Empire State Building and Central Park. The visit culminated in a great celebration at the Waldorf Astoria, which included performances by Chuck Jackson, and other musicians and singers who participated in the Frank Brown International Songwriters Festival.

On Saturday February 4, the Harlem community, along with Joe Gilchrist and the Frank Brown Songwriters Festival celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast historic visit to New York. Musicians, songwriters, business leaders and residents

from the Flora-Bama and Gulf Coast toured the 911 Memorial site and performed in lower Manhattan and in Harlem. This Cultural Exchange was promoted with the theme of, “Merging Manhattan Music with Southern Sounds.” Kicking off the diverse musical tribute were original songs by “Lil Man,” an eight year old “Hip Hop” artist who writes his own songs; stellar performances by Michael Jackson impersonator, Jesse Valenca; and Urica Rose, an electrifying singer and songwriter, representing the “New Generation of Rock” performers.

The group attended Open House events at the world famous Apollo Theater, including performances by Ballet Hispanico, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Amateur Night winners and was given a tour by Apollo historian Billy Mitchell. The group joined Commander E. Randy Dupree at Harlem's historic Colonel Charles Young American Legion Post 398, where Flora-Bama musicians joined Hammond B3 Organist and Jazz legend Seleno Clark, Percussionist Don Eaton and the Harlem Groove Band for a jam session to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of their visit to New York City.

As Dean of the New York Congressional Delegation, I want to extend my thanks to Joe Gilchrist and the Frank Brown Songwriters Festival for their outstanding economic, moral and spiritual support to Harlem and the great State of New York.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system:

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chair, today, the House is considering legislation that would repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB. To be clear, I am not a big fan of IPAB—I had concerns with this new entity when it was first being discussed, and I remain concerned with it today.

I do find it interesting, however, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are suddenly so troubled about IPAB's effect on Medicare, when their plan to end Medicare is so much worse.

I fear that today's floor action is less about a real concern for seniors, hospitals and physicians in the Medicare program, and more about trying to win a battle in the war against health insurance reform.

They have shown with their words and their actions, even down to their choice of offsets, that this yet another political exercise.

But that is a game that I refuse to play. Our seniors deserve real answers and real solutions, not yet another repeal-but-not-replace attempt.

So even though I don't think that IPAB is the best answer to strengthening Medicare, I can't in good conscience vote for this bill, at

this time, with this kind of clear and blatant political agenda at the core of this debate.

What we need is a real, substantive discussion about solutions to keep Medicare costs, and medical malpractice costs as well, under control for the long term. But with today's floor action, these needed discussions are too likely to get lost in a sea of shouting.

And that's not what we need right now.

If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to work with us to address the concerns that many of us have with IPAB, to make changes, then I'm willing to meet them halfway.

But if they want to blame the Affordable Care Act for everything wrong in the world, even when it has controlled costs so well that IPAB won't even come into play for years to come, and even when it has given millions of American families control back over their health care, I can't join them in these political attacks.

So I have to oppose passage of this bill today.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this month, the world laid to rest a holy and wise spiritual leader, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of All Africa on the Holy Apostolic Seat of Saint Mark the Evangelist of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and head of The Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, who passed from this life on March 17, 2012.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III presided more than 40 years over a worldwide expansion of the Coptic Orthodox Church. During his papacy, he appointed the first-ever bishops to preside over North American dioceses. When His Holiness became pope in 1971, there were only four churches in North America. Today there are over 100.

Pope Shenouda III was well known for his deep commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. He believed that Christian unity was a matter of faith rather than of jurisdiction. In 1973, Pope Shenouda III became the first Coptic Orthodox Pope of Alexandria to meet the Roman Catholic Pope in over 1500 years. In this visit, Pope Shenouda III and Pope Paul VI signed a common declaration on the issue of Christology and agreed to further discussions on Christian unity. He led dialogues with various Protestant churches as well as Islamic clerics and Muslim leaders worldwide.

In an address he gave at an ecumenical forum during the International Week of Prayer in 1974, he declared, "The whole Christian world is anxious to see the church unite. Christian people, being fed up with divisions, are pushing their church leaders to do something about church unity and I am sure that the Holy Spirit is inspiring us."

A biographer aptly described Pope Shenouda III as "A distinguished and promi-

nent religious leader, a profound theologian, a gifted preacher, a talented author, a spiritual father, a man of God his entire life. He devoted his writings, teachings and actions to spread and propagate for the rules of understanding, peace, dialogue and forgiveness."

I had the unforgettable honor of meeting Pope Shenouda III as our local Coptic Christian Church in Northern Ohio was being constructed. He was a man of immense faith, great humanity, and deep intellect. When I asked him about future unity among various faith confessions, I will never forget his steady, strong countenance as he advised me "that would take love." He was a very profound man.

President Obama called Pope Shenouda III "a beloved leader of Egypt's Coptic Christians and an advocate for tolerance and religious dialogue," and said he will be remembered "as a man of deep faith, a leader of a great faith, and an advocate for unity and reconciliation." The faith community around the world and people of good will everywhere joins the Coptic Orthodox Church in mourning the passing of Pope Shenouda III from this life. We extend our sympathy to church members worldwide and in our own community. His contributions to world understanding and bridging horizons yet unmet will flower in decades hence. May God bless his soul and allow his unfinished work to progress in his memory.

[From The New York Times, Mar. 20, 2012]

THOUSANDS MOURN COPTIC POPE IN CAIRO

(By Kareem Fahim)

CAIRO—In front of a tearful crowd of thousands including members of Egypt's emerging political class, a funeral service was held on Tuesday for Pope Shenouda III, the popular and charismatic leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church, who died on Saturday.

The pope's body lay in an open white casket through the emotional two-hour ceremony in St. Mark's Cathedral, where he was remembered as a "wise captain" who built bridges to Muslims and other Christian denominations and who strengthened the identity of the church, especially among its younger members. Hundreds more people stood outside the cathedral, unable to gain entry to the invitation-only service.

The scene turned to pandemonium later in the day when thousands of people mobbed a van carrying the pope's body to his burial site, in a monastery in northern Egypt. Red-faced military policemen wrestled with mourners carrying the pope's portrait who were straining for a last glimpse of him through the dark windows of the white van.

The flood of grief for the only pope many Egyptian Copts had ever known—he was enthroned in 1971—underscored feelings of unease that many Christians have felt in the ongoing tumult of Egypt's political transition. Roughly 1 in 10 Egyptians belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, which was founded in the first century and was the majority religion here before the coming of Islam. In recent years, long-held complaints about anti-Coptic discrimination have been replaced by deeper fears that Islamist parties will further marginalize the Christian population as they try to refashion Egypt into a more ob-servant Muslim state.

For most of his four decades as patriarch, Pope Shenouda managed a delicate balancing act, strongly supporting President Hosni Mubarak in exchange for a measure of protection as the pope strengthened the church's power and reach. He was broadly

popular among Egyptians, and was especially well-known for his wit. He was also seen as rigid defender of a conservative church, and some Copts faulted him for resisting reform.

Criticism of Pope Shenouda's relationship with Mr. Mubarak became more pronounced after the popular uprising against Mr. Mubarak's rule took hold in January 2011, with attacks on churches and Coptic protesters, by hardline Islamists and the government's troops following behind. Since the pope's death, though, that criticism has been laced with sadness.

"I don't disagree that he interfered with politics," said Mina Samy, a 30-year old physician outside St. Mark's on Tuesday. "But when he spoke, he did it for Egypt's best interest, not for his personal interests, like others do."

"I'm hoping for another copy of him," he said. "Nothing is too much for God. He was a great scholar, and he led the church through major crisis. He left us at a time when Egypt needed him."

HONORING BILL KEFFLER OF RICHARDSON, TEXAS FOR 35 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, with great appreciation for his selfless public service, I rise to recognize before the U.S. House of Representatives Bill Keffler of Richardson, Texas on the occasion of his retirement.

Bill's résumé of accomplishments closely matches that of the City of Richardson itself. During his 35-year career with the City, 17 as city manager, he has played an integral role in bringing first-rate transportation entities, higher education institutions, healthcare providers, and corporations to Richardson. Under his watch, the City has also received countless awards for its responsible, transparent, and innovative administration.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to work with Bill know him as a true leader not just in Richardson, but in the entire North Texas region. A current member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the North Texas Commission, Bill is also the immediate past-president of the Texas City Manager's Association and an advisory board member for Methodist Richardson Medical Center, Leadership Richardson, and the University of Texas at Dallas Development Office, to name a few.

Bill, a mix of Irish Green and Raider Red, kicked off his stellar career back in 1977 having already obtained a bachelor's degree in government at Notre Dame and a master's degree in public administration at Texas Tech University. He and his wife, Chrissie, raised five great kids in Richardson. Bill's family and friendliness are considered staples in the community—as are his famous striped ties.

To Bill, thank you for all you've done to build Richardson into the city it is today. It is a pleasure to know you, and I wish you the very best in the years to come. God bless you, and I salute you.