

By Albert Carey Caswell . . . Bless You All, as you have blessed so many Heroes and our Nation!

**HONORING THE ROCK BRIDGE
HIGH SCHOOL LADY BRUINS
SWIMMING AND DIVING 400-YARD
FREESTYLE RELAY TEAM**

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins Swimming and Diving 400-Yard Freestyle Relay team on its Missouri State Championship.

Madeline Simon, Libby Walker, Kortney Betz and Chelsea Tatlow gave a tremendous showing in the 400-yard freestyle relay with a time of 3:33:37, allowing them to pull ahead by less than two-tenths of a second of the runner-up. These young ladies and their coaches should be commended for all their hard work throughout the regular season and helping bring home their school's first overall team state championship.

I ask that you join me in recognizing the Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins for a job well done!

**RECOGNIZING THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING**

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today, April 16, 2012, marks the fifth year anniversary of the Virginia Tech shooting in which 32 innocent lives were lost. Today I rise to observe the anniversary and I urge all Americans to join me in keeping all those who were injured, and the families of those who lost their lives in this tragedy in their thoughts and prayers.

More than 30 members of the Virginia Tech family perished that day. Among them were future lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, soldiers, business men and women, mothers, fathers, and leaders. The loss of life at Virginia Tech is a tragedy that all Americans mourn.

On this day, I salute the strength and resilience of the Virginia Tech community. Those belonging to "Hokie Nation" include nearly 30,000 students, 1,300 faculty members and 200,000 living alumni who take pride in their school and in their accomplishments as an institution.

Days after the shooting, Nikki Giovanni wrote a moving poem about the events and her words still ring true today.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are sad today, and we will be sad for quite a while. We are not moving on, we are embracing our mourning.

We are Virginia Tech.

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly, we are brave enough to bend to cry, and we are sad enough to know that we must laugh again.

We are Virginia Tech.

We do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does a child in Africa dying of AIDS, neither do the invisible children walking the night away to avoid being captured by the rogue army, neither does the baby elephant watching his community being devastated for ivory, neither does the Mexican child looking for fresh water, neither does the Appalachian infant killed in the middle of the night in his crib in the home his father built with his own hands being run over by a boulder because the land was destabilized. No one deserves a tragedy.

We are Virginia Tech.

The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong, and brave, and innocent, and unafraid. We are better than we think and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imaginations and the possibilities. We will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness.

We are the Hokies.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We are Virginia Tech.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the horrible tragedy that occurred five years ago today and as we remember the events of that dreadful day, let us not forget those who lost their lives. I extend my deepest condolences again to the families of all the victims. On this five year anniversary of the horrible tragedy at Virginia Tech, let us extend our thoughts and prayers to all those who were injured or have suffered as a result of this senseless act of violence.

Today, we are all members of the Hokie Nation. We are Virginia Tech.

**RECOGNIZING FRANK BECKWITH
AS THE 2012 HURLBURT AFA
CHAPTER 398 MIDDLE SCHOOL
TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Frank Beckwith, the 2012 Hurlburt Air Force Association Chapter 398 Middle School Teacher of the Year.

A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and a veteran of Desert Storm, Mr. Beckwith continued his service and leadership in a different capacity—this time as a teacher. He began teaching in 1993 in North Carolina, and in 2001, he moved to Santa Rosa County to teach at Avalon Middle School in Milton, Florida.

Mr. Beckwith has engaged his students through his passion for science and its use as a tool for problem solving. To enhance their learning, he procured data processing equipment for the classroom and has motivated students to excel in science, technology, engineering, and math education through innovative programs. He founded the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Activity, and Math) program, where students are af-

forded the opportunity to spend the day on Blackwater River, competing in various categories, including measuring water chemistry, mapping river depth, and racing to haul one person's daily water consumption from the river to a tank. He is also the sponsor and coach for the school's BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science, and Technology) Robotics team.

Aside from teaching at Avalon Middle School, Mr. Beckwith also serves as a faculty associate at the University of West Florida and is President of the Santa Rosa County Science Teacher's Association.

Frank Beckwith's desire to teach is rooted in his family, through his father and grandfather, and was also inspired by his high school science teachers. Their guidance, enhanced by his experience and understanding of the importance and power of education, help built the strong foundation from which Mr. Beckwith teaches and empowers his students to strive for excellence. His greatness lies well beyond his title as Hurlburt AFA Chapter 398 Middle School Teacher of the Year—it lies in the hearts and minds of those who have been deeply impacted by his dedication to the teaching profession and service to our great nation.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Mr. Frank Beckwith for his great achievements and honorable service. My wife Vicki joins me in wishing him all of the best.

**64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL**

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to recognize the 64th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel.

On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate for Palestine expired, and the Jewish People's Council approved the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. That document encapsulates centuries of hopes, hardships, dreams, persecutions, tenacity, and faith. And it signifies the fulfillment of the prayer of the Jewish people: To return once again to their homeland and build a nation based on the principles of freedom, justice, and peace.

It is fitting that on that same day, President Harry Truman signed his name to the announcement recognizing the provisional government of the new Jewish state as the de facto authority of the State of Israel, thus making the United States the first nation to recognize Israel as a nation.

In that moment 64 years ago, and in every moment since, the Jewish people have persevered in the face of adversity, thriving as a nation and as a people, and contributing globally to advancements in areas ranging from academia, economics, and business to arts, culture, and politics. And all the while, the Jewish people have continued to live as a people who, as the Declaration states, love peace but know how to defend themselves.

In the decades that have passed since that momentous event, Israel has remained the United States strongest ally in the Middle East, and the United States has stood steadfastly with Israel. Today, and in the days that

lie ahead, we must continue to stand unwaveringly with Israel. As the modern State of Israel celebrates 64 years, I join with countless others to extend my congratulations to the Jewish people—in Israel, in the United States, and around the world. And I offer my heartfelt prayers for the safety, peace, and prosperity of the State of Israel.

EMANCIPATION DAY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, April 16, 2012

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, on Emancipation Day in the District of Columbia, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the 150th anniversary of President Lincoln's signing of the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act, which freed 3,100 slaves of African descent in the nation's capital. I have introduced a resolution today in honor of this historic day. The record should also reflect that the District of Columbia Council passed the following resolution in honor of the anniversary:

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION 19-207

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MARCH 6, 2012

To recognize and preserve the cultural history and heritage of the District of Columbia; to formally recognize the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day on April 16, 2012, as an important day in the history of the District of Columbia and the United States in that, on April 16, 1862, 9 months before President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 to begin to end institutionalized slavery in America, President Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act to release the 3,100 enslaved persons of African descent held in the nation's capital, making them the "first freed" by the federal government, at a cost of nearly \$1 million, in 1862 funds, paid to the people who enslaved them; to recognize that, after the Civil War, formerly enslaved people and others commemorated the signing of the 1862 act by parading down Pennsylvania Avenue in festive attire, with music and marching bands, proclaiming and celebrating freedom in the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade, which was received by every sitting President of the United States from 1866 to 1901; and to recognize that, on March 7, 2000, the Council of the District of Columbia voted unanimously to establish April 16th as a legal private holiday, the Emancipation Day Parade resumed in the nation's capital in 2002, and, on April 5, 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day was made a legal public holiday, recognized annually on April 16th.

Whereas, on April 16, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act ("Emancipation Act") during the Civil War;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act provided for immediate emancipation of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent held in bondage in the District of Columbia;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act authorized compensation of up to \$300 for each of the 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children held in bondage by those loyal to the Union, voluntary colonization of the formerly enslaved to colonies outside of America, and pay-

ments of up to \$100 to each formerly enslaved person who agreed to leave America;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act authorized the federal government to pay approximately \$1 million, in 1862 funds, for the freedom of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent in the District of Columbia;

Whereas, the Emancipation Act ended the bondage of 3,100 enslaved men, women, and children of African descent in the District of Columbia, and made them the "first freed" by the federal government during the Civil War;

Whereas, nine months after the signing of the Emancipation Act, on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, to begin to end institutionalized enslavement of people of African descent in Confederate states;

Whereas, on April 9, 1865, the Confederacy surrendered, marking the beginning of the end of the Civil War, and on August 20, 1866, President Andrew Johnson signed a Proclamation Declaring that Peace, Order, Tranquility and Civil Authority Now Exists in and Throughout the Whole of the United States of America;

Whereas, in December 1865, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified establishing that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction";

Whereas, in April 1866, to commemorate the signing of the Emancipation Act, the formerly enslaved people and others, in festive attire, with music and marching bands, started an annual tradition of parading down Pennsylvania Avenue, proclaiming and celebrating the anniversary of their freedom;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade was received by every sitting President of the United States from 1866 to 1901;

Whereas, on March 7, 2000, at the Twenty Seventh Legislative Session of the Council of the District of Columbia, Councilmember Vincent B. Orange, Sr. (D-Ward 5) authored and introduced, with Carol Schwartz (R-At Large), the historic District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2000, effective April 3, 2001 (D.C. Law 13-237; D.C. Official Code 1-612.02a, 32-1201), and on that same date moved an emergency version of the legislation that established April 16th as a legal private holiday;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Emergency Amendment Act of 2000, which established April 16th as a legal private holiday, was passed unanimously by the Council on March 7, 2000, and signed into law on March 22, 2000 by Mayor Anthony A. Williams;

Whereas, on April 16, 2000, to properly preserve the historical and cultural significance of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day, Councilmember Orange hosted a celebration program in the historic 15th Street Presbyterian Church, founded in 1841 as the First Colored Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, on April 16, 2002, after a 100-year absence, the District of Columbia, spearheaded by Councilmember Orange with the support of Mayor Anthony Williams, returned the Emancipation Day Parade to Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., along with public activities on Freedom Plaza and evening fireworks (D.C. Official Code 1-182);

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade and Fund Act of 2004, effective March 17, 2005 (D.C. Law 15-240; D.C. Official Code 1-181 et seq.), established the Emancipation Day Fund to receive and disburse monies for the Emancipation Day Parade and activities associated with the cele-

bration and commemoration of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day;

Whereas, the District of Columbia Emancipation Day Amendment Act of 2004, effective April 5, 2005 (D.C. Law 15-288; D.C. Official Code 1-612.02(a)(11)), established April 16th as a legal public holiday;

Whereas, on April 16, 2005, District of Columbia Emancipation Day was observed for the first time as a legal public holiday, for the purpose of pay and leave of employees scheduled to work on that day (D.C. Official Code 1-612.02(c)(2));

Whereas, April 16, 2012, is the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day, which symbolizes the triumph of people of African descent over the cruelty of institutionalized slavery and the goodwill of people opposed to the injustice of slavery in a democracy;

Whereas, the Council of the District of Columbia remembers and pays homage to the millions of people of African descent enslaved for more than 2 centuries in America for their courage and determination;

Whereas, the Council of the District of Columbia remembers and pays homage to President Abraham Lincoln for his courage and determination to begin to end the inhumanity and injustice of institutionalized slavery by signing the District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act on April 16, 1862;

Whereas, the alignment of the (1) election of the first African-American President of the United States, Barack H. Obama; (2) dedication of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial; (3) groundbreaking for the National Museum of African American History and Culture; (4) 150th anniversary of the District of Columbia Emancipation Day; and (5) 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 2013, are historically important for the District of Columbia and for the United States; and

Whereas, the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day is a singularly important occasion that links the historic Presidency of Abraham Lincoln with the equally historic Presidency of Barack H. Obama, as the first President of the United States of African descent.

Resolved, by the Council of the District of Columbia, That this resolution may be cited as the "District of Columbia Emancipation Day—150th Anniversary Recognition Resolution of 2012".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia finds the 150th anniversary of District of Columbia Emancipation Day is an important, historic occasion for the District of Columbia and the nation and serves as an appropriate time to reflect on how far the District of Columbia and the United States have progressed since institutionalized enslavement of people of African descent. Most importantly, the 150th anniversary reminds us to reaffirm our commitment to forge a more just and united country that truly reflects the ideals of its founders and instills in its people a broad sense of duty to be responsible and conscientious stewards of freedom and democracy.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President