

recognizing our local African American students' Honor Roll status. The African American Education Task Force Academic Achievement Celebration takes place at the ACTS Full Gospel Church, pastored by Bishop Bob Jackson in Oakland, California.

During this year's event, 1,026 African American students from the 8th through 12th grades will be honored for attaining grade point averages of 3.00 or above for the 2011–2012 school year. This outstanding group of young people has accomplished a great deal, and we are pleased to commend them for their academic dedication and success. Especially in light of the great budgetary challenges faced by the State of California and the city of Oakland, these students have proven themselves to be bright, capable and resourceful.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every student for earning this distinction. Thank you for understanding and promoting the importance of staying in school. By continuing to be the best students possible and by making the most of your education, you will enjoy a full range of opportunities to achieve your personal goals, as well as give back to your communities.

Your accomplishments represent the strength of your initiative and a commitment to excellence. The skills and discipline you have developed will be of great use as you continue to follow your dreams toward success. I am so very proud of you for taking personal pride in your studies. Oakland's future leaders are certainly present at this celebration of academic achievement, and I welcome your many civic contributions in the years to come.

On behalf of the residents of California's 9th Congressional District, I again salute you for your exemplary academic performance. I am confident that you will continue this fine record of scholarship, service and success. Keep up the good work, and I wish you the very best in all of your future endeavors.

#### RECOGNIZING MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH, MAY 15, 2012

#### HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mount Carmel Baptist Church who this year, will celebrate 100 years of service to the Arverne Community in my district.

Mount Carmel Baptist Church is committed to advancing the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, comforting the sick and distressed, and helping humanity.

Under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Hezekiah May, Mount Carmel Baptist Church became the flagship Baptist Church on Far Rockaway. Rev. May was a freedom fighter for affordable and appropriate housing and through his efforts, the City of New York took notice and began building public housing.

Mount Carmel Baptist Church has served as a pillar to the Arverne community through its desire to further the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through social activism, pastoral care, community engagement and youth development.

On behalf of the more than 655,000 residents of Sixth Congressional District, we thank

Mount Carmel for your outstanding contribution to our community, city, and state. We join with Mount Carmel to celebrate 100 years of service and wish you continued success in all of your endeavors.

#### RECOGNIZING SMSGT (RET.) WALTER LAMERTON'S EFFORTS TO BRING A USO CENTER TO TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

#### HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor retired U.S. Air Force SMSgt (Ret.) Walter Lamerton of Trinity, Florida for his critical role in bringing the USO to Tampa International Airport.

On January 18, 2012, the USO Board of Governors voted to grant a charter for the USO expansion to Tampa. This USO Center is scheduled to open in August 2012 and will support the more than 300,000 service members and their families that annually transit the Tampa Bay community. At the time of the vote, USO Headquarters Staff stated that "Many have applied, but that this is the first Chartered USO Center approved in the nation in over twenty years."

Walter Lamerton was a driving force behind submitting this ultimately successful proposal to the USO Board of Governors. He worked closely with volunteers throughout the Tampa Bay area and effectively conveyed their message of support for our service members and their families to both the local community and to the USO Board of Governors, under a compact timeframe.

Mr. Lamerton's leadership and attention to detail were critical in the effort to bring the USO Center to Tampa. As a result, many of our Nation's service members and their families will directly benefit from his efforts for years to come.

As Vice-Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I constantly find myself in awe of the sacrifices and efforts that have been made on behalf of our great country by the men and women who have worn the uniform of our Armed Services. Because of this, it is my distinct honor to recognize and express my gratitude to Walter Lamerton for his dedication in bringing the USO to the Tampa Bay area. His success in this endeavor will serve as a lasting legacy for all who support our military and their families. The USO Center at Tampa International Airport will, surely, be a shining star in our community.

#### PRAISE FOR TAIWANESE ELECTIONS

#### HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as Taiwan prepares for its Presidential inauguration on May 20, I'd like to congratulate our friends in Taiwan for the smooth conclusion of their presidential election on January 14, when Mr. Ma Ying-jeou won a second term as President of Taiwan.

For over half a century, the United States and Taiwan have enjoyed strong relations over economic and security issues. Our shared interest in peace and stability has guided the relationship, and our commitment to Taiwan's security, as stated in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, has enabled Taiwan to build a strong democratic government which serves as a symbol of success for others in the region and beyond. Similarly, Taiwan's economic partnership with us has been extremely beneficial. Taiwan is currently our tenth largest trading partner, with over \$68 billion in total bilateral trade.

During Mr. Ma's second term, I hope our relationship with Taiwan will continue to flourish in areas as diverse as trade, military cooperation, and the Visa Waiver Program.

Congratulations to Mr. Ma and the people of Taiwan.

#### THE DEATH OF NICHOLAS KING

#### HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, it is my regrettable duty to report the death of a great American, Nicolas King. Mr. King died on April 3, 2012 in Santa Rosa, California. He was 79. Perhaps more than any other person, Mr. King was responsible for preserving the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, which has been visited by millions over the past 50 years.

King was instrumental in preserving the world famous Watts Towers which adds an aesthetic appeal to my 37th District. The unique work of folk art, was created over 33 years by Italian immigrant Simon Rodia. Rodia, described as a cement finisher and construction worker, began building the towers in 1921. The nearly 100-foot complex of spires and other structures are decorated with broken pottery, seashells, glazed tiles and pieces of colored glass.

In 1954, Rodia moved to Martinez, California to be closer to family and signed his property over to his neighbor, Louis Saucedo. His former house had burned down, the gates to the walled property were open and unguarded, and the grounds were littered with refuse left by unwanted visitors. Nicholas King and his friend, William Cartwright, visited the famed Watts Towers for the first time and were surprised by what they saw.

The current owner was a dairy farmer by the name of Joseph Montoya. For \$3,000 and a downpayment check of just \$20, Nicholas King and William Cartwright became the owners of the Watts Towers. King and Cartwright cleaned up the area around the towers, and an architect friend of Cartwright soon drew up a plan for a caretaker's cottage on the property. But when the architect went to apply for a building permit, he discovered that an order had been issued earlier for Montoya to "demolish and remove the fire-damaged dwelling and dangerous towers from the premises on or before March 5, 1957." The Watts Towers in 1959 passed a stress test in which the tallest spire was subjected to 10,000 pounds of force and avoided demolition.

With the establishment of the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts, King and Cartwright yielded ownership of the towers to

the committee. The group elected Cartwright as its chairman and he and King as permanent directors.

Born Robert Nicholas King in Sacramento on March 21, 1933, he studied acting at the Pasadena Playhouse after graduating from high school in 1951. King had uncredited roles in *The Long, Hot Summer* and as a medic in *The Young Lions*. He had the role of Arnie in *Joy Ride* (1958) and Georgie in *The Threat* (1960). He also had a recurring role on the TV version of the radio serial "One Man's Family."

In 1969, King became a partner in a land cooperative on the Garcia River in Point Arena in Northern California, where he moved with his wife, Kate, and their two young children. King was involved in logging and started a nursery business in which he grafted apple trees and sold root stocks and apples. He also helped organize the river preservation group Friends of the Garcia and was active in the group Save Our Salmon.

Nicholas King's inspirational life reminds us to preserve the rich artistic history of America. William Cartwright said it best, "We knew we had to do something that we believed should have been done before us: preserving something that needed it and not abandoning it." Generations to come will be touched by the artwork at Watts Towers and we have Nicholas King to thank. He will be deeply missed and I urge my colleagues to join me in extending condolences to the King Family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for a moment of silence in memory of Nicholas King.

#### THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

#### HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Last year, agricultural producers had record net farm income and trade surplus. One in twelve jobs is linked to agriculture and forestry and American consumers spend less than 10 percent of their disposable income on food. USDA programs affect each of us—from nutrition programs to food safety, conservation to plant and animal health, and rural development to research and extension.

The department manages anti-hunger and nutrition programs that help ensure millions of Americans have enough food. Food banks across the country count on the Emergency Feeding Assistance Program to keep their pantries stocked. USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is helping more than 46 million Americans. More than 30 million American school children rely on the National School Lunch Program for a nutritious lunch. But there is clearly more to do.

With almost 13 million unemployed in this economy, and one in six Americans living below the official poverty line, we know that millions of middle-class and working families are hurting. Across the country, nearly fifteen percent of American households were food insecure in 2010. In other words, nearly 50 million Americans, including over 16 million chil-

dren, struggled with hunger. In my district in Connecticut, nearly one in seven households were not sure if they could afford enough food to feed their families. Earlier this month, the Meals on Wheels Association released its first report card on senior hunger: with 1 in 7 seniors facing the threat of hunger, the country received an F.

At a time such as this, our key federal food security policies become all the more vital. They make a difference for the health and well being of millions of families. In the words of Harry Truman, "Nothing is more important in our national life than the welfare of our children, and proper nourishment comes first in attaining this welfare."

As we look to the future, it is important that the United States maintains its leadership in agriculture. And we must also strive to ensure that everyone has access to the food they need to thrive.

#### CELEBRATING 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

#### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 150th anniversary of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Founded by President Lincoln in 1862 as "the People's Department," the USDA has helped modernize and advance American agriculture to the point where Americans now enjoy a safe and abundant food supply at a cost of less than ten percent of their disposable income. The USDA has been critical in protecting the farmers and ranchers who are the stewards of our land and essential to ensuring that our nation maintains an independent and secure food supply.

Over the course of its 150 years, the USDA has repeatedly been vital in solving the many agricultural challenges facing our nation. For example, a rapidly declining pollinating species population currently threatens the sustainability of our agriculture across the country. With one out of every three bites of food we eat the result of the intervention of pollinators like birds, bats, bees, and butterflies, the USDA has taken a lead role in addressing this looming disaster through programs like the Agricultural Research Service's research on the cause and treatment of Colony Collapse Disorder. The importance of the USDA is reflected in the fact that without pollinators, our country would not be able to grow food.

The USDA also does much more than just work with our local agriculture. It is a key player in addressing the changing needs of agriculture across the globe. The world's population is estimated to be nine billion people by 2050. Consequently, the world will need to produce more food in the next 50 years than has been produced during the past 10,000 years combined. The USDA, America's farmers, ranchers, and research scientists will answer this challenge together through programs such as Food for Progress, McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition, the USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse, and the Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative.

One hundred and fifty years ago, President Lincoln recognized the potential of America's farmers to resourcefully cultivate our land to provide an ample food supply. Today, we must use the same innovative spirit in approaching agricultural production. By supporting USDA programs and initiatives, we are able to link research and scientific innovations to effective adaptations in order to successfully address the food security needs of our country. I am pleased to honor our country's farmers and ranchers, and acknowledge the work of the USDA on this historic occasion.

#### HONORING OFFICER CRAIG BIRKHOLZ

#### HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize those peace officers being honored during National Police Week, and I particularly want to honor a constituent of mine who was killed in the line of duty last year.

Officer Craig Birkholz was only 28 years old when he was shot and killed during a six-hour standoff at a home in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, on March 20, 2011. Officer Birkholz is one of the 166 being honored today as part of National Peace Officers Memorial Day, and his name has been engraved on the National Memorial wall.

Officer Birkholz had been with the Fond du Lac Police Department for two years and was a veteran who had served in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Army. Born in Kenosha in 1982, he graduated cum laude from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh with a degree in criminal justice. In 2009, he married his wife, Ashley. Men and women such as Officer Birkholz, who make the ultimate sacrifice in order to keep us safe, truly are owed our eternal gratitude.

I hope that National Police Week celebrated here in Washington will help those affected by the loss of a relative or fellow officer know that their life of service will continue to be honored. We will remember the life and service of Officer Birkholz, and the memorial is a lasting tribute to him and all fallen officers.

#### TRIBUTE TO SIGNAL HILL POLICE OFFICER ANTHONY GINIEWICZ ON THE OCCASION OF BEING ADDED TO NATIONAL PEACE OF OFFICERS MEMORIAL WALL OF HONOR

#### HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 15, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, later today the name of Anthony Giniewicz of Signal Hill, California, will be added to the National Peace Officers Memorial Wall of Honor. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial is the nation's monument to law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. Officer Giniewicz, who served on the Signal Hill Police Department, died on December 7, 2011, as a result of gunshot wounds sustained 26 years earlier during an exchange