

Britton-Mihalo was doing for the people of Afghanistan when he was killed just two months before his 26th birthday.

SSG Britton-Mihalo gave his life attempting to secure for the Afghan people the blessings of freedom. We will never forget his ultimate sacrifice toward that honorable end. To SSG Britton-Mihalo's loving wife Jesse, his family, and friends, my wife Vicki joins me in offering our most sincere condolences and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful United States Congress, I stand here today to honor SSG Andrew Trevor Britton-Mihalo and all of the heroes we have lost. May God continue to bless them and the United States Armed Forces.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
BRIAN M. MOORE

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer tribute to a truly superb civil servant, veteran, and engineer, Mr. Brian Moore, on the occasion of his retirement as Deputy District Engineer for the Los Angeles District of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. It has been such a pleasure to know and work with Mr. Moore as he has helped address critical water resources and infrastructure needs for this nation during his career. Overall, he has served his country as a young soldier and as a distinguished civilian senior leader for the Los Angeles District spanning a career of over 44 years.

Mr. Moore's technical expertise and superior leadership has been instrumental to the success of the Army Corps of Engineers' many complex projects and programs. As the Army Corps of Engineers transformed itself to a project management focused organization, he was called to lead the role as one of the first Deputy District Engineers for Project Management and is retiring as the longest serving Corps leader in that role. He has been instrumental in the success of the extremely capable Los Angeles District which has nearly 400 projects in navigation, flood control, environmental restoration, military construction, and environmental cleanup. He has led and mentored future engineering leaders supporting our country's critical infrastructure including young military officers who have been assigned to the Los Angeles District.

He has been equally adept at interacting with all levels of government partners, agencies, stakeholders, and public sponsors in meeting the nation's military construction and water resources needs. The organization and teams that he has led have been known for their intricate problem solving, common sense solutions, consideration of stakeholder needs, and teamwork. All in all, I know of no finer member of our esteemed United States Army Corps of Engineers and I wish him the best in the years ahead.

IN RECOGNITION OF GREGORY
CHRISTIANSEN

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Gregory Christiansen in the event of his retirement after many years of dedicated service to music education and the community.

Gregory earned his Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from the University of the Pacific in 1974, where he graduated Cum Laude. He went on to earn a Diploma from the Grove School of Music's Professional Instrumental Program in 1983. He finished his education by obtaining his Master of Music degree in Music Education from the University of Southern California in 1985. He graduated with distinction as a member of Pi Kappa Lambda, the honorary music fraternity.

Gregory has spent his career teaching music education to students ranging from elementary school through college. He taught a College Jazz Ensemble for 3 years. For 30 years he worked with both instrumental and choral groups at the high school level. There he also developed and organized an effective parent support group. He taught Middle School Instrumental Music for two years where he developed a jazz curriculum for the students. Finally, he taught Elementary Instrumental and General Music for four years, during which he developed a fourth grade exploratory instrumental music curriculum.

Gregory has dedicated many years to supporting not only his students but the community as a whole. He has provided musical performances for many community events, as well as for visiting dignitaries. Gregory also worked with many community members on producing a band review, which attracted groups from over 40 schools in the region. Through his leadership, both Merced High School and Golden Valley High School have performed in the Pasadena Rose Parade. Gregory organized a non-profit parent organization to help raise funds for music students.

Gregory is not only part of the local music scene but he is involved in many national music organizations. He has served on the board of both the International Association of Jazz Educators as well as the Northern California Band Association. He holds professional affiliations with the following organizations: Jazz Educators Network, California Teachers Association, California Music Educators Association and California Band Directors Association.

Throughout his involvement, he has been recognized for his work and dedication to his community and students. In both 1998 and 2005, he received the Northern California Band Director of the Year. He has also received Outstanding Band Director plaques at fifteen different band reviews. Merced County has recognized his work in music education by honoring him with the Teacher of the Year Award in 2008, Superintendent Recognition Award in 2009 and the Rotary Teacher of the Year Award in 2009.

Gregory was not only dedicated to his current students but the future of music education as well. He served as Master Teacher and mentor for many Student Teachers during his

career. He provided opportunities for graduated students to work with and teach present students. Gregory also provided clinics at conferences for new teachers dealing with selecting repertoire, instrumentation and marching band organization.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Gregory Christiansen for his dedication to music education and our community as a whole.

HONORING ALL-STATE CHOIR
MEMBER OF CARROLL SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Paige Stinnett, of the Carroll Senior High School choir, for being selected for the Texas Music Educators Association's All-State Women's Choir.

Every year 60,000 high school musicians in Texas compete for the opportunity to be among the 1,500 chosen for various All-State ensembles. Choir singers first audition before judges in one of twenty-eight Regions, and the highest ranked musicians from each Region then participate in one of seven Area competitions. The best among the Area singers then go on to the annual clinic and convention hosted by the Texas Music Educators Association, TMEA. The clinical consists of three days of rehearsal with prestigious musical experts and culminates in a grand All-State performance.

Being selected for one of the three All-State choirs (Men's, Women's, or Mixed) is indeed a high honor for any high school choir member and is a testament to their hard work, talent, and dedication. That makes it all the more impressive that Paige Stinnett, who is a soprano, not only made it to the 2012 Women's Choir, but also achieved the same honor in 2011. Her success is truly remarkable. I would also like to recognize the valuable contributions made by Chris Hutchinson, the Carroll Senior High School choir director, whose commitment to his school's musical program has shown brilliantly through his students.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating Paige Stinnett on being chosen for the TMEA All-State Women's Choir.

HONORING VINCE HARRIS

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. CARDOZA, and I rise today to acknowledge and honor Vince Harris, Executive Director of the Stanislaus Council of Governments, StanCOG, to thank him for his leadership and direction of transportation improvements in the Central Valley.

StanCOG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization, MPO, and the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, RTPA, for the

Stanislaus Region with responsibility for developing and delivering the Regional Transportation Plan, RTP. This plan includes a diverse mix of transit, non-motorized, highway and local street and road projects to be completed in Stanislaus County over the next 25 years. During Mr. Harris' tenure as Executive Director, he was responsible for all agency functions including regional transportation planning, program administration, financial management and budget control.

Mr. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering Technology from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in Public Administration from California State University in Hayward. His career spans 35 years, with transportation assignments in both the public and private sector in California, Texas, Utah, and Washington, DC.

Prior to joining StanCOG, Mr. Harris was the Deputy General Manager of San Francisco Municipal Railway's Construction Division. In this capacity, he headed a division of approximately 140 engineers, technicians, and administrative staff responsible for the delivery of the agency's \$2.67 billion Capital Improvement Program. The program included new Light Rail Transit extensions, facility upgrades, and enhancements.

He is also the former Executive Director of the Alameda County Transportation Authority. In this role, he managed the agency's \$1 billion Half-Cent Transportation Sales Tax Program. The program included a variety of projects which addressed mobility for seniors and disabled persons, major transit, bikeway and highway corridors, and improvements to local streets and roads.

During his time as Executive Director, Mr. Harris worked collaboratively with the Stanislaus region's nine cities and the county to support significant transportation improvements to the region. Under Harris' leadership, millions of transportation dollars financed projects such as the Whitmore Interchange Reconstruction Project, the State route 219 (Kiernan Avenue) Widening Project, and hundreds of locally developed and delivered transportation projects.

Mr. Harris' last day with StanCOG is May 31, 2012. He has accepted a new position as Director of Capital Programs and Construction for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

Mr. Speaker, please join us in honoring and commending Vince Harris, Executive Director of the Stanislaus Council of Governments, StanCOG, for his numerous years of selfless service to the betterment of our community.

HONORING SERGEANT JOSEPH SHEPHERD

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sgt. Joseph Shepherd on his retirement from the Waterville Police Department.

Sgt. Shepherd is officially retiring from the Waterville Police Department after 31 years. Joe began his career in law enforcement at the age of 22, and he has been a model of integrity ever since. Throughout his career, he has never wavered from his dedication to the

community or his desire to help people. Waterville police Chief Joseph Massey has called Sgt. Shepherd a "problem solver" with a stellar reputation throughout the city. These values have made him one of Waterville's most effective and well-liked police officers.

With Sgt. Shepherd's departure, Waterville is losing a valued asset. Joe holds a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from the University of Maine at Augusta and a master of business administration from Thomas College. He has also left his mark on the department as a supervisor and training officer. As he embarks on this next exciting step in his life, Sgt. Shepherd leaves behind a community ever grateful for his years of dedicated service.

I am pleased to join the Waterville Police Department, and the people of Maine, in honoring Sgt. Shepherd on his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Sgt. Shepherd on achieving this milestone, and thanking him for all that he has done to keep Maine families safe.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, May 18, 2012, I was meeting with constituents of my district on the East Steps of the Capitol building and missed rollcall 293 on the Rahall Motion to Instruct Conferees. Had I been present, I would have voted "present" on H.R. 4348.

THE HELPING EXPEDITE AND ADVANCE RESPONSIBLE TRIBAL HOMEOWNERSHIP (HEARTH) ACT

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 205, the HEARTH Act.

Under current law, many Native Americans living on tribal land have to fight government bureaucracy to buy a home. Just like other Americans pursuing the American dream of homeownership, they find a house, get a mortgage approved, and make an offer. It's at this point that the dream often turns into a nightmare for tribal members. Before they can close on a house, they have to get approval from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to lease the land—and this approval process can take as long as two years. During this extremely long wait, the mortgage approval usually expires and sellers can rarely wait this long. With such a daunting and long process, it's no wonder that tribal members give up and decide to move off the reservation and away from their families and communities, just to own a home.

The good news is that the bill before us today would allow tribal governments to lease the land directly, reducing the approval time and making this process much easier for Native Americans to buy homes on tribal land. The tribes would initially receive approval for

their own leasing regulations from the Secretary of Interior, and could then process lease applications internally, rather than having them all be processed by the BIA. This leasing structure would also encourage community and economic development on tribal lands, and spur renewable energy development in Indian Country. Tribal governments will be able to control their own land and direct the necessary resources to construct community centers and fill commercial spaces. This tribal control is critical, and I wholeheartedly support it and encourage my colleagues to join me in voting yes.

This bill is badly needed so that Native Americans do not have to endlessly wait to pursue the American dream. As a member of the Congressional Native American Caucus, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 205.

TRIBUTE TO THE "WELCOME HOME" VIETNAM VETERANS CELEBRATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2012

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the selfless service of the Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery who celebrated their 20th anniversary on December 17, 2011 of bringing honor and dignity to the burial services of our veterans.

The Memorial Services Detachment is an all volunteer group composed of retired and former military service members who have committed themselves to ensuring that all military veterans interred at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery receive proper burial honors. The Memorial Services Detachment provides a final gesture of honor to our nation's veterans at no expense to the veterans' families.

The group was founded on December 17, 1991 to address the budget cutbacks that occurred in the late 1980s that caused the Department of Defense to restrict full military burial honors to individuals dying while on active duty and those who were fully retired. Since its inception, the Memorial Services Detachment has ensured that all deceased veterans' families receive the solace and comfort that these burial honors provide.

The Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston's continued service to our country has received national recognition from the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania which bestowed the group with the George Washington Honor Medal for their adult community volunteer service. The Memorial Services Detachment was also honored as the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County's Volunteer of the Year in the military-community category in 2009.

I would again ask you to join me in congratulating the Memorial Services Detachment at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery on their 20th anniversary of service to our nation's veterans.