

Smith (WA)	Tonko	Webster
Southerland	Tsongas	Welch
Speier	Turner (NY)	West
Stearns	Turner (OH)	Westmoreland
Stivers	Upton	Whitfield
Stutzman	Van Hollen	Wilson (FL)
Sullivan	Velázquez	Wilson (SC)
Sutton	Visclosky	Wittman
Terry	Walberg	Wolf
Thompson (CA)	Walden	Womack
Thompson (MS)	Walsh (IL)	Woodall
Thompson (PA)	Walz (MN)	Woolsey
Thornberry	Wasserman	Yarmuth
Tiberi	Schultz	Yoder
Tierney	Waters	Young (AK)
Tipton	Waxman	Young (IN)

NAYS—4

Amash	Kucinich
Gohmert	Paul

NOT VOTING—31

Austria	Gosar	Rigell
Barber	Gutierrez	Rivera
Bartlett	Hochul	Ross (AR)
Bono Mack	Holden	Roybal-Allard
Brown (FL)	Johnson (IL)	Sanchez, Loretta
Campbell	Lipinski	Stark
Dicks	Mack	Towns
Dingell	Manzullo	Watt
Filner	Marino	Young (FL)
Frelinghuysen	Murphy (CT)	
Gallely	Pence	

□ 1903

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall 610, I was away from the Capitol due to prior commitments to my constituents. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

□ 1910

CHAIRMAN HALL

(Mr. PALAZZO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to stand before you today to recognize Chairman HALL and his work as the oldest serving Member of Congress.

Over the last 2 years, I've had the honor of serving with Chairman HALL on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. Chairman HALL has been an inspiration and a mentor to me in those 2 years. He has been a crucial force in keeping NASA on track and for pushing for a strong American space program. We've had the opportunity to work on space bills, such as the recent indemnification extension and the NASA artifacts bill that passed unanimously back in September.

Another reason I admire Chairman HALL is that he never forgets those back home whom he represents. He doesn't want anyone else to forget either. He's a Texan through and through. Chairman HALL always tells me that he is willing to forgive people who aren't from Texas. Fortunately, he has been especially good to me, and that's probably because I married a Texan myself.

Finally, Chairman, I know at your age you don't like the word "final";

but in closing, I just want to say the no-nonsense way you've led the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, the way you've put good policy and people above politics—all without compromising your principles—is the kind of leadership we need. That's the kind of leader you are, and that's the kind of leader we should all strive to be.

So, today, I thank you for your many years of service, for your model of leadership, and for being so kind to all of those Members who aren't from Texas.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

OUR FRIEND, RALPH HALL

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is a good day. We get to honor a great and magnificent American—my friend, our friend, RALPH HALL.

In the moments and minutes and hour to come, there will be many who will rise to recognize the extraordinary public service, but I want to add, in addition to the extraordinary public service, a man who has seen numbers of Presidents. As an American who has worked, spoken and achieved under all of them, RALPH HALL today reigns as both the oldest Member of Congress and the oldest House Member known to cast a vote on the House floor.

But that is not his only definition, for he is one who has a heart and who recognizes the value of service to the American people.

Oh, he loves his great State of Texas. He is truly a tall Texan. He is a faithful public servant who has dedicated 32 years of service to representing the constituents of the Fourth Congressional District; but he started his life by the service to the United States in the United States military—in the United States Navy. Yes, 1942.

So he has seen this Nation in her ups and her downs, but RALPH HALL has never been down. What a great leader of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. What an opportunity to serve with him. What a servant as he worked with Presidents like Lyndon Baines Johnson, making difficult and tough decisions—not a partisan but a lover of America.

Yes, I can stand here today and say not only is this great hero and American and Member of the United States Congress—young in age but old in numbers—wise, dedicated, but I can also say that he is a lover of his family: his late wife, his grandchildren, his children. I was able to join him at a time when he had to visit a grandchild. I was glad to be able to have RALPH in our city, not for the cause that he was, but to be able to say, RALPH, you're a friend, and we stand with you during this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an American hero and also to a friend and a great leader on this floor, someone from whom I wish years and years and years of service. As a fellow Texan, I join my Texans and others to say, Thank you, RALPH HALL, for the friendship, the leadership, the courage—and, yes, you are an American hero.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings, including applause, is in violation of the rules of the House.

RALPH HALL

(Mr. FLEISCHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend RALPH HALL.

I came to this great House as a result of the election in 2010 and was privileged to be assigned to the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. The chairman was RALPH HALL. Chairman HALL showed me kindness. I went to his office. He showed me the corsairs that he flew in World War II. He told me stories about playing baseball with Ted Williams in the Navy in World War II.

Truly, this is a great man.

He has shown both sides of the aisle fairness and compassion in his service as chairman, and he has mentored me. More importantly, when I asked him to come to my beloved city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, he came and visited our great national lab there.

I honor Chairman HALL today, and I thank him for his great service to this House as chairman and as my friend.

A TALL TEXAN AMERICAN HERO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous materials for the RECORD on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of tonight's Special Order is to celebrate our friend and colleague RALPH HALL's distinguished service in Congress. If there were a congressional hall of fame, tonight would be Representative HALL's induction as the

oldest—some would say the most seasoned—voting Member in the House of Representatives.

As Members of Congress, we have the distinct honor of serving the American people. Each day as a Representative can be both challenging and rewarding; and though we sometimes make headlines, we do not always make history.

□ 1920

That is why today is especially important. Today is a day for the history books. After 32 years of service, Congressman RALPH HALL today became the eldest Member of Congress to cast a vote in the House of Representatives. And on Christmas Day of this year, Representative HALL will become the oldest Member of the House to have ever served in our Nation's history.

They say that with age comes wisdom. So Congressman HALL may also be the wisest man to have served in the House of Representatives. They also say that some things get better with age. In Representative HALL's case, his commitment to both his country and his constituents just continues to increase.

Since he was 19 years old, RALPH HALL has led a life of service for which we can all be grateful. As a lieutenant in the Navy during World War II, Chairman HALL served as a pilot, and since then he has never hesitated to accomplish a mission.

In fact, he recently was back up in the air. Following the lead of another great Texan, President George H.W. Bush, RALPH HALL parachuted out of an airplane this past August, proving that he's never afraid to jump right in.

That mentality has made him a distinguished Member of Congress and a very effective chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. Congressman HALL represents the Fourth District of Texas, which has only elected three Members of Congress in the last 100 years. His constituents back in northeast Texas are accustomed to electing strong leaders and keeping them there.

It was 100 years ago this month that his district elected a young farmer turned State representative named Sam Rayburn, who went on to serve in the House for the next half century. RALPH HALL knew and worked with Sam Rayburn early in his career when RALPH HALL was a county judge. He was elected to that position while he was still in law school.

Earlier today, we had the privilege of unveiling a new portrait memorializing Representative HALL's tenure as chairman of the Science Committee. It was fitting that the ceremony took place in the Rayburn House Office Building.

Throughout his tenure, RALPH HALL has been a consistent advocate for advancement through scientific research and development. He has been an ally of small businesses, and as Science Committee chairman has worked to ensure that business owners are not unnecessarily burdened by excessive EPA regulations.

RALPH HALL has fostered programs to better understand extreme weather and to ensure that citizens are prepared for natural disasters. He also has worked to advance science education and programs that promote medical, energy, and technological breakthroughs to benefit future generations.

Throughout his time in Congress, Chairman HALL has served this institution with style and humor. Back home, you would be hard pressed to find a constituent who hasn't been given an "All for Hall from Rockwall" encased penny that is a fixture of his campaigns going back to his first race.

His constituent service is second to none—which is a large part of why he has had no difficulty in getting re-elected back home no matter how his district lines have changed over the past three decades.

In Washington, to this day, he still gives his constituents more White House tours personally than any other Member of the House.

It is an honor to work with RALPH HALL as both a colleague and a friend. RALPH HALL has always said, "I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington." Actually, he has achieved that rare combination of both.

We thank RALPH HALL for his service to the Congress and to our country.

Mr. Speaker, before I recognize other Members of Congress here tonight, I just want to remind us all that this Special Order is only an hour long, and given the number of people from whom we have had requests to speak, we are going to ask each person who does speak to limit themselves to 2 minutes or less so we'll have time not only for the Members who want to speak, but we'll also hear from RALPH HALL at the end of this Special Order.

Having said that, I'm pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas, Congressman JOE BARTON, who is the second-most-senior Member of the Texas delegation.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. There are many RALPH HALL stories, most of which we can't really tell on the House floor—that's how funny they are—but I want to tell one real, true RALPH HALL story which is the epitome of a Texan.

Several years ago, RALPH told me that he had some property up over in his district and he didn't have time to go visit it. He had been involved in a bank, and apparently the bank had taken control of the property, and somehow RALPH had gotten control of the bank's assets legally, so it was his property, but he never had time to go visit it. He had a caretaker who was taking care of his property. He began to get letters from the Railroad Commission down in Austin. The Railroad Commission is in charge of oil and gas leases and royalties for the State of Texas, and they kept sending these letters asking where to send his royalty checks. And he finally called down and said: I don't have any oil and gas wells, what are you talking about?

Well, he said, on such and such a plat in such and such a county, you're the listed owner of this producing oil well. So RALPH took time one weekend to drive up by himself, and sure enough there was a producing oil well on some property that he did not know about. Obviously, he made a change in who was his caretaker at that property, but that is one true RALPH HALL story that shows the epitome of being the Texan that he is.

I first got to know RALPH back in 1985 when I was a freshman on the Science and Space Committee and RALPH was subcommittee chairman of the Space Subcommittee. Since that time, he and I have become good friends. He is the epitome of a true Texas gentleman. He is the most well-liked person in the congressional delegation, not just from Texas but from the entire Congress, and I am very honored to be one of the very few who gets to speak on what a great man he is. We're so glad that he's still in the Congress.

So, RALPH HALL, we love you. We hope you serve for another 10–20 years and continue to be an inspiration to the Fourth District of Texas.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, SAM JOHNSON, a true Texas hero.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

You know, RALPH's district adjoins mine. He and I have represented the same area in Collin County for many years. RALPH is just one of a kind. He's one of the nicest guys I've ever known. It's a privilege to recognize my fellow Texan and good friend for his many years of outstanding service to our country and to the great State of Texas.

RALPH is a man of great integrity whose steadfast commitment of service to our Nation is to be commended. RALPH and I have known each other a long time, and I'm lucky to have him as a neighbor and friend. I don't have a better friend or ally in the Congress, and I want to congratulate RALPH on reaching this milestone.

He was in the United States Navy and he fought for our country in World War II. And then when we got back up where we do an event every year in McKinney, Texas, he was kind of mad at me because I jumped out of an airplane five times and he hadn't jumped out of one. And so he decided he was going to jump out of one just so he could come to that meeting and tell us he did it. And he did.

He's still a great patriot. He lives and breathes America. I look forward to many more years with RALPH HALL.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, who is the ranking member of the Science Committee of which RALPH HALL is the chairman.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. I rise today to

honor Congressman RALPH HALL, who is the dean of our Texas congressional delegation, and a lifelong public servant from the State of Texas.

□ 1930

I don't know that I have a better friend in this body than RALPH HALL, and our relationship goes all the way back to the Texas Legislature.

When I first went to the Texas House back in 1972, he was a part of the senate. And I still have a little penny that is encircled in a little silver band that says, RALPH HALL of Rockwall. And I've always kept it as something special because he is a very special person to me.

When he switched parties in 2004, and I've said this before, I tried to call him several times and I didn't get a response. So I finally said, just, I want to leave this message; tell him I still love him. In 30 seconds, he called me back. And I really meant that. I meant it then; I mean it now, because party has never been anything that separated friendship, and he's a perfect example of that.

His sense of humor has been so useful on the committee that often it's used to make witnesses more comfortable or to break some of the partisan bickering.

But whatever, he's unique in this body. If we had more RALPH HALLS, we wouldn't have the rating that we have today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Congressman RALPH HALL, Dean of the Texas Congressional delegation and a life-long public servant from my State of Texas.

RALPH HALL is often quoted, saying "I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington." I do both. I have tremendous respect for him as my Chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology and he is a true friend back home in North Texas. RALPH HALL in many ways has been able to transcend the extreme partisan climate which exists in Washington today with his keen political acumen and candid sense of humor.

Through our shared experiences in the Texas legislature and on the Science Committee, I have learned that RALPH enjoys a good joke and that I should not try to match him in storytelling. RALPH uses humor to diffuse tensions in a room. I have seen him use it to do everything from stopping partisan bickering to easing a witness's nerves. It's a real skill and I have truly appreciated it over the years.

You may recall back in January of 2004 after serving 12 terms as a Democrat, RALPH HALL decided to run as a Republican. I was the first Democrat to call RALPH when he switched parties. As soon as I heard this news I attempted to call him at his office, however I was unable to get in touch. After a few more attempts, I left a message saying, "just tell him that I still love him." He called me right back, and said he was so happy to hear my message because his wife was mad at him. Some said she actually had him sleeping on the couch. He knew several of his Democratic friends would be upset with him.

Our districts are practically right next to each other and we had been friends for years.

I wanted him to know that I certainly didn't agree with the switch, but that we would always be friends, and I meant it.

It has been an honor to be his friend and colleague all of these years. RALPH HALL continues to inspire and encourage us all through his milestone of service to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize RALPH HALL for his many accomplishments as an exceptional politician, civic leader, businessman and shining example of the American dream.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas, KAY GRANGER.

Ms. GRANGER. Like all the Members that are speaking tonight, I'm very honored to pay tribute to our friend, RALPH HALL. And I thank Congressman LAMAR SMITH for organizing this very well-deserved tribute.

Congressman HALL served his country as an aircraft carrier pilot in World War II, and has continued his commitment to service ever since.

As the oldest Member of Congress to cast a recorded floor vote, the dean of the Texas congressional delegation, and the oldest Member of this House, Congressman HALL has a long, distinguished career behind him.

More important than the longevity of RALPH HALL's service, however, is the incredible dedication and commitment to his constituents that he's shown in his service. Congressman HALL has repeatedly earned the trust and respect of voters of north Texas who elected him to his first political office 62 years ago, and they've been sending him back with overwhelming support for 32 years. All along the way, in every office he's served, Congressman HALL has made Texas proud, and continues to do so as chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Serving with RALPH has been a true honor, and I look forward to continuing to serve with him well into the future.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, PETE SESSIONS, the next chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Tonight we all rise in support of the favorite son of Rockwall, Texas, and perhaps all of Texas, the Honorable RALPH HALL.

And I think of so many wonderful stories about RALPH. Tonight you'll hear many of them, Mr. Speaker, of the Texas delegation, of the life and times of our members, as we not only try and gather together every week, but also work together.

One of my favorite stories about RALPH HALL really took place with the young woman who was just up here, KAY GRANGER. One night KAY GRANGER, then as a Member of my Congress, and myself—this is probably 12, 13, 14 years ago—were with RALPH HALL at the brand-new Reagan airport. And we sat down, waiting for a flight that was going to be in 35 or 40 minutes, that got delayed 35 or 40 minutes

or maybe longer, and about an hour and a half later, the American Airlines people came and said, Just so you know, the flight left about 30 minutes ago. Do y'all want to have dinner with us or what?

And we looked up at each other and we'd missed the flight, and that was because RALPH HALL was telling the funniest stories of taking time with KAY GRANGER and me, sitting around a small table at Reagan airport.

And he was doing more than just telling stories. What RALPH was really trying to do was to mentor KAY GRANGER and PETE SESSIONS on, not the life and times of RALPH HALL, but to talk about citizenship and of service and of benefit to people. And he talked about how he, in his personal life, lived his life for the benefit of other people.

From that day forward, I learned more about RALPH HALL and have continued to want to hear him and tell the stories. Every time it is about how you can better your life, about how you can look at what your service and your time and the things that you do is about other people, not yourself. RALPH HALL, for all the years that I am sure he has served, whether it was as a State senator or a county judge or as a distinguished Member of Congress, RALPH has done so for others.

RALPH comes and goes every single weekend. I've never spent a weekend in 16 years that I've been a Member of Congress, and I'm sure RALPH has not in the time he's been here since the early eighties.

Mr. Speaker, RALPH HALL is an important and distinguished Member of this body, and he has brought distinction, not just to the Texas delegation and not just to the people that he recommends, but I think to all of America, as a statesman, a man who gets his work done, not to put himself forward, but to put others.

I think he's a model of success. He's a model of somebody that I want to become more like. But I will tell you what: If we will take the time tonight, those of my colleagues that have not known him, to watch the way RALPH does it, he even does it today the same way he did it the first day he came here. And that, to me, is a legacy of RALPH HALL, a great Member of Congress and one of my colleagues.

I'm proud and pleased to be here tonight with the Honorable RALPH MOODY HALL, Member of Congress.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, JOHN CULBERSON.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, the Proverbs tell us that our good name is our most valuable possession on Earth, and by that measure RALPH HALL is truly one of the wealthiest men in America. He's earned the trust of his constituents over and over again, as he has earned the trust of his colleagues, because we know, his constituents know, that RALPH HALL always keeps his word, that RALPH HALL always does what's right for America. He does the

right thing for the right reason on every occasion.

And he understands that his service in Congress is for his fellow man. Just as he served us in uniform in our Armed Forces, RALPH serves here as he served as county judge, as he served as State senator for the benefit of Texas, for the benefit of America.

It's an extraordinary privilege for me to serve with him, to look to RALPH HALL as a mentor, as a friend, as a colleague, as a fellow Texan, to honor him tonight, one of the great Americans, one of the great Texans ever to serve in the United States Congress, RALPH HALL. We honor and thank him for his service to the Nation and to the great State of Texas.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas, JEB HENSARLING, the next chairman of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in great honor to recognize my friend and fellow Texan, RALPH HALL, for being the oldest Member of Congress to cast a recorded vote on the House floor. It is not often that I have been given the opportunity to recognize someone with such a long, long, long, very long history of service to our country.

Everyone in this institution knows that RALPH's passion in this institution is science and space and technology. It represents the areas of the committee he now chairs.

When I came here, I asked someone, Why is RALPH such an expert in science? And someone said, Well, you may not know it, but according to some, he was there when Columbus discovered the Earth was round, Newton discovered gravity, and Franklin discovered electricity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they say that imitation is the greatest form of flattery, and this was a poor attempt on my part to show how RALPH HALL brightens this institution every day with his humor. He is clearly the wittiest Member of Congress in a body that is in desperate need to be brightened up and occasionally benefited by such wit and humor.

But besides his wit and humor, for those who really know him, he is clearly one of the wisest men to ever serve in this body. And I certainly benefit from that wisdom, as do so many others.

□ 1940

Mr. Speaker, we heard earlier that RALPH has said, I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington. The truth is, not only is he respected in Rockwall, Texas, he is beloved in Rockwall, Texas. And not only is he liked in Washington, more importantly, he is respected in Washington. And more importantly, he is respected by both Republicans and Democrats alike. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a huge, huge testament.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm honored to recognize a Texas legend, a World War II veteran, a statesman, a role model for all American citizens, including my children. I'm honored to recognize him on this historic occasion. I'm honored to recognize this institution for this historic moment. But most of all, I'm honored to call RALPH HALL my friend.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, MICHAEL BURGESS.

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentleman for the recognition.

I don't want to say that RALPH HALL has been here for a long time, but he was here when the Earth cooled the first time.

RALPH, I just can't tell you what it's meant to serve with you. When I was a freshman Member of Congress, you actually were on the other side of the aisle. You were the ranking Democrat on the Science Committee, and I served with you there. Certainly, your ability to get your way in that committee was something that I've always marveled at, because we had the votes, but you had the way of getting things done. And then I lost the ability to have my bills bipartisan because I always got RALPH to cosponsor whatever crazy little bill I had up there and it became bipartisan, and then RALPH switched sides on me. I wasn't able to utilize that any longer.

I've got to tell you, RALPH, one of the profiles in courage that I will always remember from my service here in the House, I hadn't been here 3 months and it was the first budget vote that I had lived through. It was a pretty wild night. It went on late. The budget was kind of seesawing back and forth with not quite enough votes to pass, and then it had enough and then people switched. Right at the end, RALPH HALL came down this very aisle to this table and cast the deciding vote in favor of the Republican budget. At the time, he was a Democrat, but it was important to him. Our country had just gone to war in Iraq. The President needed the support of the House of Representatives. To RALPH, that was an important vote to cast. Honestly, I'll just never forget that profile in courage that you showed that night and how you put country above party, you put country above self, and you made that sacrifice.

RALPH, it has been an honor to serve with you. You are a near neighbor in north Texas. We ride back and forth on that darned plane every week, and it is a testament to your ability to not just serve here in Washington, but take care of your folks at home in Rockwall.

RALPH, it's been an honor to serve with you.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, JOHN CARTER.

Mr. CARTER. I thank you for yielding.

I'm really pleased to step up tonight and say a little bit about my friend,

RALPH HALL. Here he is, the oldest Member to cast a vote on this floor.

Texas has sent an awful lot of treasure to this place over the years. We've shared resources. We are a State of resources. We shared our resources, we think, pretty graciously with the rest of the country. And when we shared RALPH HALL with this body, we shared one of Texas's treasures.

We've talked about RALPH, and most of the stories that have been told I have known and thought about sharing. But the truth is that when I think about RALPH HALL, it's amazing. People that don't really know him in Texas think they know him because they know his reputation.

It's been said that a statesman is a person who puts everything above himself and all partisanship aside and tries to do what's right for the country. I've watched RALPH as a Democrat, I've watched him as a Republican, and that's what he does.

A national treasure is something they bury in the ground, so RALPH doesn't like to talk about that, but what he does like to talk about is the fact that we all need to be nice to each other. And RALPH HALL is like what we Texans define as a Texan. And the first definition every Texan will give is a man that'll look you straight in the face, make a deal with you, look him in the eye, he gives you his word, and you can count on it. That's the definition we Texans cherish.

He is the man who originated that definition, because he's the man you can look in the eye, and when he promises you he's going to do something, he's going to do it; but even more importantly, to be a person who has charm and grace and humor and the ability to make your day brighter every time you see him. I don't know of anybody in my life I've ever met that has that talent like RALPH HALL. That makes him a treasure.

God bless you, RALPH.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, RANDY NEUGEBAUER.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. I thank the gentleman.

I rise this evening to talk about my young friend, RALPH HALL. One of the things about RALPH is that he is like the Energizer bunny. He's up just about every morning pretty early and walks. But most of the time you will see him down at the White House about 7:30 letting some constituent in for a White House tour or, in some cases, taking that constituent for a tour.

The thing about RALPH is he's never interested in RALPH; he's always just interested in you. If you walk up to RALPH, during that conversation it's going to come out, What can I do for you? What do you need? How can I help you?

What RALPH has done for all of his life is served. He understands that the roles that he's been allowed to serve in were really roles of servanthood. And he is the ultimate servant. He has the

servant's heart. It's a delight to be around him.

I've enjoyed serving on the House Science Committee with him. Sometimes there will be some adversarial conversations in a committee hearing, but RALPH has, always, a way to bring levity sometimes when levity is needed.

I woke up one morning here just a few months ago and I read in the paper: RALPH HALL Jumps Out of Airplane. Now that would shock some people, but I guarantee it didn't shock anybody in the Texas delegation, because we know when RALPH wants to make a point, he just goes ahead and makes the point.

Now, you've got this guy that gets up at 7 o'clock in the morning, he's down at the White House, he jumps out of airplanes, he goes back and forth to Dallas every weekend, and the question, RALPH, that all of us want to know, is: What kind of vitamins are you taking? Because we all want to be on whatever diet that you're on.

But what I wanted to say about RALPH tonight is RALPH is a Congressman to many people and the people in Rockwall, but to all of us, RALPH HALL is our friend. And we're very proud of our friend, and we're very proud to have the opportunity to serve with a great man like RALPH HALL.

My RALPH HALL story is: We were celebrating one of his birthdays on a Thursday—the Texas Republican delegation has lunch every Thursday—and somebody had brought a birthday cake in, and I think we had a candle there. We just had one to kind of commemorate all of the years. The fire marshal wouldn't let us bring all the rest of them, RALPH, I'm sorry. Anyway, he was making light of his birthday, and he looked at us and he said, The worst thing somebody can say to you on your birthday is, Doesn't he look natural?

What we know is that RALPH HALL is not a natural person. He's a super-natural person.

RALPH, we love you and we appreciate the opportunity to serve with you. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, MIKE CONAWAY.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. SMITH.

I, too, want to add my congratulations and prideful acknowledgement of RALPH HALL's long service. You've heard the long list of his accomplishments and his service. RALPH represents the folks in northeast Texas ably and well, including my alma mater, Texas A&M at Commerce. He is a terrific individual.

I'm in constant awe of his quick wit and his storytelling ability. RALPH is never at a loss for some remark or response to whatever is going on. It just makes you want to laugh out loud. That is a rare talent—one that I would love to have, but don't. I am in awe of his quick wit and his wisdom.

I'm also in awe of his gentle spirit and kindness that he expresses to every

single individual. It is deep-seated and it is heartfelt and it is genuine and real. And those of us that have the honor and the privilege of service with RALPH HALL understand it and bask in it on every single occasion.

So I would simply like to add my congratulations and heartfelt admiration to serve with RALPH HALL and to be able to say that when I write about whatever I did in Congress, one of the lines in there will be that I had the honor and privilege of serving with RALPH HALL at a time when he was at his best.

RALPH, congratulations.

□ 1950

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, TED POE.

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the chairman for yielding. Thank you for sponsoring this Special Order where we can, as a body, recognize our friend and fellow Texan, Chairman RALPH HALL.

Mr. Speaker, we Texans are proud of our State, we're proud of our heritage, and we're proud of the people that have been in our State. Texans have a long history of remarkable Texans in our history, men and women with, I shall call it, personality, uniqueness, all the way back to General Sam Houston—and there are many others. But on that list will be, and is, Chairman RALPH HALL. He is a person of personality and character—and quite a character.

He has not always been a Republican. At one time he sat over here. He was a Democrat. He switched, got religion, and came over and became a Republican. But his principles have never changed; they have always been the same. Whether he sat over here or whether he sat over here, he has always been a man of remarkable character and always voted his principles.

He is a World War II veteran. We have a special place in this country for veterans like him that served in the great World War II. My dad served in World War II. He was on the other side of the world while RALPH was flying off of aircraft carriers in the Pacific.

There is a special something about World War II veterans. They understand American history. They understand the importance of our military and how it's important for us as a Nation to always do two things—have a strong military, and then support our veterans when they return home, whether they return home as wounded warriors or whether they return home with the scars of war, and some that return home in those caskets. RALPH HALL makes sure that we remember our veterans.

He was a business owner. He ran for office because his wife wanted him to run for office. Mary Ellen was responsible for him spending many years on the campaign trail running for office. As the chairman of the Science Committee, he has been a special fan of NASA. We in Texas, we love NASA. When he learned—rumor has it—that

the space shuttle was going to New York City instead of Houston, Texas, rumor is that he was trying to get a posse to go up to New York and bring that shuttle back to Houston where it belongs. I don't know if that's true or not.

RALPH HALL loves America, he loves this body, he loves Texas, but most of all he loves the American people. It's a great honor to recognize you, a statesman and favorite son of Texas, Chairman RALPH HALL.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, LOUIE GOHMERT.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for yielding.

It is an honor, privilege and a pleasure—all three—to be here to pay tribute to our friend RALPH HALL. I think I'm the only one that has spoken that was actually represented by RALPH HALL, and so it's not my first testimonial for the gentleman from Rockwall.

In fact, in 2001, it looked like there was a new redistricting map the legislature had come out with, and it was going to put my home town of Tyler in a different district. During my years on the bench, I had been concerned about some of the Federal laws that were luring people into ruts they couldn't get out of without any hope, and that's when I first thought about running. But I knew, and I said publicly, as long as RALPH HALL is my Congressman there's no need for me to run. I know that man, I know his heart, I know his convictions—not criminal convictions, I don't know of any of them—but I know the convictions of his heart, and I know him to be a man of conscience, a moral, upright, decent man who had a wonderful wife, and there was no way there was a need for me to run as long as RALPH HALL was my Representative.

I was told by some Republican leaders, look, he's a Democrat, you ought to run against him anyway, and I said no way. I couldn't do any better than RALPH HALL. I'm well represented. But in 2003, finally the legislature actually did redistricting, and we ended up in a different district, and I ran. But I've been amazed not only by the incredible knowledge of science and technology and the workings of this body, but as others have alluded to, the sense of humor. But now one thing I've noticed, a lot of times around here people get a good joke, they just keep it to themselves, whereas RALPH shares even funny material.

We had a college coach here that was going to speak to a big group of Members of Congress, and somebody told him, just start off with something funny and you'll be fine. He was nervous, and he said, I don't know anything funny. So RALPH said, well, what would you like it on? He said, well, what about education? He said, here's your joke:

A teacher tells her first-grade kids that they've got to come back and tell

some family story that is told around the family. Everybody in the classroom the next day had their story, but little Johnny never raised his hand. Finally, she said, Johnny, everybody's done their family story but you, don't you have one? And he said, well, I do have one, it's even got a moral, but I don't know. The teacher said: Well, is it clean? He said sure. She said, Well, go ahead and tell it. So Johnny got up and said, Well, my Aunt Katie was in the Air Force as a pilot, and she got over hostile territory. My Aunt Katie always was prepared for the worst. She had a bottle of whiskey, an Uzi, a 9mm and a knife in the cockpit with her just in case something happened. Sure enough, she got hit, she's going down. She ejects, drinks the bottle of whiskey real quickly, and then sees all these enemy soldiers coming at her, wipes out a couple dozen of them with the Uzi, takes the 9mm, wipes out 12 more, and then hits the ground. Three more come at her, and she takes them out too.

The teacher said: Good grief, that's a family story and you say it has a moral? He said, Well, I don't know if you'd call it a moral, but it's what everybody in our family knows, and that is, when Aunt Katie's been drinking, you don't mess with her.

So, anyway, I was impressed that he shared that, but more than anything I'm proud to have shared time here and seen a true Representative at work. It's been my honor. Thank you, RALPH, for all you've done.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, PETE OLSON.

Mr. OLSON. I thank my colleague and fellow Texan for giving me a couple of minutes to talk about RALPH HALL, a man we all know, a man we all love.

My comments are going to focus on some of the amazing events that have occurred during RALPH HALL's life and brought him to this record-setting vote he cast earlier this evening.

God had a plan for RALPH, some might call it fate—fate, which is appropriate, because RALPH's journey to get here started in Fate, Texas, population 299. RALPH was born there on May 3, 1923. Fate ensured that RALPH would have amazing brushes with history.

One amazing brush with history RALPH had occurred as a young teenager pumping gas in Rockwall, Texas. RALPH filled up a car of a young couple, a man and a woman, very well dressed, heading east. RALPH got a great tip—a quarter. In those days that was a lot of money.

□ 2000

He went into the service station to tell the boss what had happened, about the tip. He glanced at the newspaper, and he froze.

He had just filled up a car, the two occupants of which were the pictures of two people on the newspaper, the front page. These two people were Bonnie

and Clyde, the notorious gangsters who met their demise shortly after leaving Rockwall, Texas. RALPH pumped gas for Bonnie and Clyde.

But RALPH has not just had amazing brushes with history, like Bonnie and Clyde. He's made history. As a county judge, a State legislator, a United States Congressman, RALPH made our country stronger and made the world better.

I have had the honor and privilege to work with Chairman HALL for nearly 4 years to ensure America retains its dominance in human space flight.

When the Obama administration's ill-conceived budget of 2010 threatened to lose that dominance, RALPH used every tool in the toolbox of life that he had accumulated in public service to give him the tools to win the battle.

Here are a couple of those tools: Neil Armstrong; General Tom Stafford, who was here earlier today; and Gene Cernan. RALPH built a bipartisan coalition and saved the Orion crew capsule and put the United States on a path to go beyond low Earth orbit.

As a boy who grew up a mile and a half from the Johnson Space Center, I have seen RALPH HALL make history and put our country on a course where my kids, your kids, our grandkids can see an American walking on another celestial body.

RALPH, thank you for the impact you've had on my life and my family's life.

We've all talked about the chairman going parachute jumping earlier this year. I thank you for that, Mr. Chairman. Because you did that, my 15-year-old daughter came up to me and said, Dad, let's jump out of a plane when I turn 18. Thank you. Thank you for that, Mr. Chairman. You've made a difference in my life. You've made a difference in the world. We love you. We thank you.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida, BILL POSEY.

Mr. POSEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I appreciate the opportunity to join with my colleagues in recognizing Chairman RALPH HALL for his tenure and as chairman of the House Science Committee.

During his service, Congressman HALL has been one to reach across the aisle and forge bipartisan coalitions to support important legislation. And no program, in my view, has benefited more from his bipartisan commitment than the United States space program.

Representative HALL has been an especially strong voice for our Nation's human space flight program, which has benefited not only Texas and Florida, but has propelled our Nation on a path of unprecedented scientific and technological advancements.

We can all learn a lot from our colleague. Congressman HALL leads by example, and he is well known for calling a spade a spade. His word truly is his bond, and you can always take that to the bank.

Advancing our Nation's human space flight program has been a hallmark for Chairman HALL. And as we look out at America's next generation of explorers, space is their destiny. And he'll help ensure that they reach it.

RALPH, there's a lot of work to do, and I'm truly honored by the opportunity to serve with you to get 'er done. I only hope and pray that when I'm 65 years old, I'll be in half as good shape or half as smart as you. God bless you, RALPH.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, QUICO CANSECO.

Mr. CANSECO. I thank my friend and colleague and fellow Texan, Chairman SMITH, for yielding.

Today, I honor a great man, a great Texan, a great American, RALPH HALL. As he makes history today for being the most experienced Member—in life-long years—of this Chamber to cast a vote, I am proud, as a member of the Texas delegation, to call him a friend and a colleague.

RALPH HALL embodies so many of the virtues we celebrate as Americans. He is a man who is forever devoted to his family. He is a patriot who served his country during World War II. He is a public servant who has dedicated his life to serving the people of Texas and the United States. He is an example to all Americans not just for his service to family and country but in the graceful manner in which he goes about his tasks and the joy that he inspires in all of us.

This Chamber will always be grateful for the service that RALPH HALL has given to the House of Representatives and to the Nation.

We all enjoy his good humor, his dedication, and his love of country that he brings to his job each and every day.

Tonight, as we pay tribute to RALPH HALL and wish him many more years of service to the people of Texas and the United States, I thank him for the privilege of serving by his side as a friend and a colleague in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, BILL FLORES.

Mr. FLORES. I thank Chairman SMITH for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of my Texas colleagues who has just become the oldest known Member of the House of Representatives to cast a recorded vote on the House floor. And I applaud Congressman RALPH HALL for passing this historic milestone.

RALPH was first elected to represent the Fourth District of Texas back in 1980 and is preparing to enter his 17th term when the 113th Congress convenes next year.

Congressman HALL currently serves as chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee. He is the longest-serving Member of the committee and is the first Member to serve as ranking member as both a Republican and as a Democrat.

Now, everybody knows what a comedian RALPH is, and I want to share a funny story with you about him. At his birthday party in May of 2011, I was asked to say a few words about him. So I talked for a few minutes about him and about what it was like to serve with him. And I ended by saying that I hoped to wrap up my time in Congress in just three to four terms and that I would never aspire to serve as long as he has, to which RALPH dryly replied, Well, Bill, we're going to miss you. So that's just the way RALPH is. He adds levity to every situation.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to work alongside RALPH. I look forward to serving with him in the future in addressing the many pressing needs of the American people.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, BLAKE FARENTHOLD.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. I am honored to be here today, as well, to pay my respect in tribute to Congressman RALPH HALL.

As a freshman in Congress, there's a whole lot to learn. When I came in, RALPH HALL was one of those people that was larger than life. And he remains larger than life after I've been here for 2 years.

He is the kind of guy that you aspire to be like in Congress—able to solve problems, able to get things done across party lines, friends with everybody, always a smile on his face, always a joke on his lips. He is a problem-solver, and that's what we need here in Washington is people who solve problems.

A perfect example that you've heard some of my colleagues allude to earlier today, there were some folks saying, RALPH HALL is too old to serve in Congress. Well, he solved that problem by jumping out of an airplane. And I'm going to tell you something. For a Navy pilot—I represent two naval training facilities—I guarantee you naval pilots do not like to jump out of a perfectly good airplane. Getting out of an airplane is a bad sign for a Navy pilot before it's landed.

RALPH HALL epitomizes and is the perfect example of what it is to be a Congressman. He could make friends with a fence post. And as I've told my wife Debbie, When I grow up, I want to be RALPH HALL.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, KENNY MARCHANT.

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, today we honor our dear friend and colleague RALPH HALL for becoming the oldest Member to cast a vote in the history of the House of Representatives.

I have had the privilege of knowing RALPH for decades. He is a dear friend and a tireless advocate for the people of the Fourth Congressional District of our home State.

□ 2010

RALPH's service to the country did not start with his election to Congress

in 1980, but started long before. He answered the country's call to serve in the service in World War II, serving in the Navy as an aircraft carrier pilot from 1942 to 1945. Later in his life, RALPH served in the Texas Legislature from 1962 to 1972.

RALPH, I did not have the opportunity to serve with you in the Texas Legislature. We were there at different times. But you served with honor, and you served as the Senate pro tempore for 2 years.

Though RALPH's time in the Texas Legislature predated me, he has always been and always will be a legend in Austin, Texas. Today, my friend continues to distinguish himself in Congress serving as the chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

There never has been anyone quite like RALPH before. He is a true Texan, a true Texan hero, and I am proud to call him my friend. Though he qualified for retirement a couple of decades ago, he still serves his country and constituents with honor and distinction.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois, RANDY HULTGREN.

Mr. HULTGREN. Thank you, Chairman SMITH.

I rise today to honor my colleague from Texas, Congressman RALPH HALL, whom I have come to know over the last few years, not only as the chairman of our Science Committee, but also as a personal friend and leader.

As Science Committee chairman, RALPH HALL has been a strong advocate for our Nation's leadership and preeminence in space exploration and launch capabilities. It is self-evident that his personal experience and expertise has carried over into a passion for American preeminence and flight in aviation.

Today, as you have heard, RALPH HALL will become the oldest known House Member to cast a recorded floor vote, and this is a great opportunity to reflect on his record of service to our Nation. We recognize not only his service here in Washington as a Member of the House of Representatives, but also his home State of Texas as a member of their legislature and as a veteran of the Second World War.

While Congressman HALL's wit, humor, and bipartisanship are rare today, they're attributes sorely needed now more than ever. I feel privileged to have served with him during my first term of Congress, to follow his leadership on NASA and human spaceflight policy, to hear his stories and knowledge spanning nine decades, and to count him as friend.

I realize more than ever that someone who is 91 years old can say a lot of things that someone 46 years old would get in a lot of trouble saying. So I'm grateful hearing you speak all the time, and I enjoy your jokes so much. Congressman HALL is not only a fighting ace and a military hero, but the

living embodiment of southern hospitality and good heartedness.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your service, and congratulations on this wonderful milestone. I know we're going to see you continue to set records for years to come.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the time has come to recognize the man we have been honoring here tonight.

Earlier this evening, Congressman HALL broke the record for the eldest Member of Congress to have ever cast a vote in the United States House of Representatives. Actually, Mr. Speaker, every day RALPH HALL sets a record for his service to our country.

Mr. Speaker, the time of the Special Order is going to appear to expire in about 5 minutes, and I hope the Speaker might consider wielding a gentle gavel.

With that, I look forward to hearing from the gentleman from Texas, the gentleman from Rockwall, Texas, himself, RALPH HALL.

Mr. HALL. Well, I don't really want to make a speech. I've enjoyed these speeches I've listened to here. A lot of it was true. Good people, great guys and gals that I work with. I'm honored to be a part of it.

For the past 32 years, I've been here. I really came up here to stay 4 years, and that's what my wife and I agreed on. I just didn't say which 4 I was talking about. But she was always one to encourage me to run, because I had a son who was a district judge, and I think she felt that me being in Congress helped that son. Mommas always love their little cubs. I think he was really helping me, because he was running on the Republican ticket then and I was running on the Democratic ticket. I soon saw the light, and I came over. But I left good friends over here, and there's good people on both sides of the docket.

There's a lot of talk about the parachute. There are things you have to do in politics sometimes. I had a race that started this last time with 78 percent of the votes it looked like. A gentleman from Houston spent \$450,000 against me. He didn't know me, didn't know the two people running against me, but spent that amount of money to defeat me for some reason because he thought I was too old to be here. He picked five of us, and the other four didn't take him on. I tried to take him on some, but in taking him on I had to assure my people that I wasn't the old goof that he was saying I was, that I was capable of the work.

The only way I could think of doing it—I run a couple of miles every morning, and when I was running, I looked up and there was an airplane up there. I thought, If I could jump up and touch that airplane, they'd think I was agile enough maybe to keep on being their Congressman. If running 2 miles every morning, voting 99-plus percent of the time, if that wasn't enough, I had to do something else. So I decided if I jump 2 miles, maybe that would be it.

We got in an airplane. I got this guy, and he really was great. He trained me and showed me how to get in and out. Of course, I had flown probably a couple or 300 hours or 400 hours during the war, and I had made one jump during the war, but it wasn't a forced jump. I knew what it was, and I knew that it was okay. I also knew that it would tell people I had not had a stroke, and that's what they were putting out. I wanted them to know I was able and capable of representing them. They had to know that, and they were entitled to know that, so I decided to jump out of that airplane.

We got right over the opening there, and I looked down. I had maybe a couple of hundred people on the ground waiting there. He said, As you jump out, reach with your heel and kick me in the rear. I was glad to do that. Right at the last, I almost decided not to jump, but I was too close and I knew I had to. I might have been pushed a little. I don't even know. I did jump, and he held on to me so tight—there were two of us there. He was holding tight, and that kind of struck me. I turned around and asked him, "Do you mean it?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "You're holding me so tight. Do you care for me? What's the deal? There's a preacher down there, and the President said men can marry men. Maybe he'll just marry us when we get there." He said, "Shut up. The ground is going to be here in just a few minutes."

It was a pretty thing to see the Earth coming up to us there and seeing good friends down there that waited in hope for me. Even my undertaker was there. My undertaker meets me every time I go home with a tape measure and tells me he has one in store for me. He also tells me not to worry about flyers; if you don't like them, they'll finally grow on you. It's kind of a smart aleck way to do it, but he's my close friend. He was an intern when I was in the Texas Senate and one of the fine leaders of Rockwall.

For the past 32 years, I've had the honor and the privilege of representing the Fourth District of Texas here in Congress, and I think it's just an honor to know that there have been 10,747 men and women elected to serve and that I may be the oldest to ever serve or to ever vote on the floor. There are others that have been here but didn't vote. I think that date comes up sometime around the 21st day of December.

My first impression of the House of Representatives when I got here began with Speaker Sam Rayburn, whose district I represent. Speaker Rayburn and my wife were good friends at Mayo College. That's what the college name was before it was East Texas State Teachers College. When I was in the senate, I changed it to East Texas State University. My wife graduated from there, and I had the privilege of handing her her diploma. Those are good things, and that's a great institution over there.

Mr. Rayburn, was called by my mother, who had known him back in the earlier days and was at Mayo College with him, to give me some kind of a recommendation to be an officer in the Army or the Navy or the Marine Corps or something. He didn't call her back. He didn't write her a letter back. He came to the breakfast table to tell her, "Maude, I can't appoint that boy to anything. There's four reasons." She said, "What on Earth can that be?" He said, "All four of his grades." That was kind of true, because I always thought everything over 70 was wasted.

□ 2020

Not a good student. Not a good football player. We lost our car early in the Depression. One guy in the Depression said he'd eaten so many rabbits he was afraid of his own dog. We didn't have that kind of a problem, but we knew what the Depression was.

I fear for this country right today in that, if we don't get together and maybe forget that we're more Republican than we are Democrat or more Democrat than we are Republican, our children are going to suffer. We need to make a move and think of them. We owe our children an opportunity, and they owe us the effort. It's just that simple. I think, in this next session, we're going to all have some give, that we're all going to get together and try to work something out.

In our leader, we have a good Speaker. He's a guy I admire and respect, a kind Speaker, a guy who means the things that he says. He is a Speaker who cares about us. I don't agree with everything he says, but we need to forget any little pettiness that we have, get behind the leadership here, and try to write some legislation. It's for our children and for our children's children. That's the most important thing I think we can do.

I know my time is about up.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEST). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, would it be appropriate to ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Texas have an additional 5 minutes, or more?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot entertain that request.

Mr. HALL. I say to the Chair, thank you very much. I appreciate and understand what the rules are, and I thank my folks for being quiet up there when I know they wanted to be heard.

God bless this Speaker. God bless you, LAMAR SMITH. You'll make a good chairman of Science, Space, and Technology.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, over the course of our history, nearly 10,750 individuals have served in the House of Representatives. According to congressional historians, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. HALL, has just become the oldest known House Member to cast a recorded floor vote.

It is yet another extraordinarily milestone for this World War II veteran from Rockwall,

Texas, a small town east of Dallas. This is a proud moment for Mr. HALL's family, constituents, and all of us who have the privilege to serve with him.

Today, the House of Representatives is also accepting a portrait of Mr. HALL in recognition of his tenure as chairman of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. RALPH's record of service to the committee, and to our country, has been a thing of beauty, and John Boyd Martin's work certainly matches that description.

The portrait contains a view of the Capitol and a picture of RALPH and his wife Mary Ellen, who spurred him to get involved and run for his mentor Sam Rayburn's old seat. The House is accepting the portrait in honor of her memory.

Also worth noting in the portrait is the space shuttle on Mr. HALL's lapel. It's a fitting symbol of his long-standing commitment to the space program and America's leadership in discovery and innovation. It also signifies how Chairman HALL has focused on exploring all of our next frontiers—starting with our own energy resources. Chairman HALL not only keeps the shuttle—and all the promise it embodies—on his lapel. He keeps it in his heart too.

Like the casting of a vote, the presentation of portrait is a personal act, but its acceptance is a shared commitment. It is for us, Mr. HALL's peers and admirers, to continue the labors the portrait honors, to sustain the curiosity it celebrates. The House's efforts to commemorate Mr. HALL's voting milestone is a good start. There is much more to do, and we can rest assured that Mr. HALL himself will make a robust contribution to this work.

Mr. BRADY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Congressman RALPH HALL, representing Texans in the 4th District of Texas. A patriotic American, U.S. Navy Veteran of World War II, Texan, and more personally a true friend and mentor. First elected to Congress in 1980, Congressman HALL has committed over thirty years of his adult life ensuring his constituents are heard throughout the halls of Congress, all the way from the Lone Star State.

Congressman HALL's public service didn't just start when he arrived in Washington—RALPH was first elected as County Judge of Rockwall County, served as President of the State Judges and Commissioners Association and devoted ten years serving in the Texas Senate, where he rose to President Pro Tempore.

It is an honor to serve the great State of Texas side-by-side with Congressman RALPH HALL and his track record of success is admired far and wide; pretty good—for a boy born and raised in Fate, Texas.

I commend the family of Congressman HALL, the late Mary Ellen Murphy, and their three sons, Hampton, Brett, and Blakeley along with their five grandchildren for the countless hours they have sacrificed while RALPH represented Texas on the national stage.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to tackling the pressing issues of our current time and getting our country back on a track to fiscal sanity alongside with Representative HALL and as he puts it quite frankly and I agree, "I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington."

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor the extraordinary public service commitment of Congressman

RALPH HALL, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee chairman, the dean of the Texas Congressional Delegation, and my long serving colleague.

Today, Congressman HALL reigns as both the oldest Member of Congress and the oldest House Member known to cast a vote on the House Floor. I am pleased to say that Congressman HALL will also become the oldest person ever elected to a new House term, during the 113th Congress.

Congressman HALL, a lifelong native of the great State of Texas, has been a faithful public servant and has dedicated 32 years of service to representing the constituents of the 4th Congressional District of Texas.

In 1942, Congressman HALL became an aircraft pilot for the United States Navy and served our country during World War II. Congressman HALL soared to the top of military rankings, becoming a senior grade lieutenant.

Congressman Hall, thank you for your service in the Armed Forces in efforts to protect our freedoms and to ensure America is the greatest country on the Earth.

Congressman HALL also served the great State of Texas in both State and local government.

In 1950–1962, he served as County Judge of Rockwall County, Texas.

In 1958–1959, he served as President of the State Judges and Commissioners Association.

He served in the Texas Senate from 1962 to 1972, where he served as President pro tempore for a year.

In addition to a successful early political career, Congressman HALL is an accomplished businessman. He served as:

The President and CEO of Texas Aluminum Corporation,

The General Counsel of Texas Extrusion Company, and

He was a founding member of Lakeside National Bank in Rockwall County.

After his service in State government and achievements in the private sector, Congressman HALL decided to run for U.S. Congress. In 1980, he was elected to serve the Fourth Congressional District of Texas and has been re-elected each succeeding Congress.

Some say that his long tenure in Congress is related to his love for the Fourth Congressional District of Texas. I can attest that Congressman HALL loves his District, and he certainly loves the United States of America. Congressman HALL is often quoted, saying, "I'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington."

Congressman Hall, we need more politicians like you who value the demands of the American people and recognize, we as elected officials, are accountable to those who elect us to office.

While in Congress, Congressman HALL has been the recipient of numerous awards. Among Congressman Hall's many achievements:

He has been credited for helping to advance research and development for new technologies to keep America competitive.

Congressman HALL has worked to utilize abundant domestic energy resources and helped explore alternative energy sources that would lower costs.

He has also played an integral role in ensuring America's preeminence in human space exploration.

I stand proudly before this body of Congress to honor Congressman RALPH HALL. He has contributed so many great things to our country, and he is the epitome of a great leader. I pray that you serve as the oldest Member of Congress for years to come.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, while today we commemorate Chairman HALL becoming the oldest Member to vote in the House of Representatives, we truly honor him, not for his age, but for the leadership, dedication, and commitment he has displayed since he was first elected to Congress in 1980. When I was first elected to the House two years ago, Chairman HALL asked me to join the Science Committee to bring my experience as a practicing surgeon to the Committee. In this way, Chairman HALL has recognized the experience and backgrounds of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, newcomers and seasoned politicians alike.

Although Chairman HALL has made many friends here in Washington, what I admire most about him is his genuine commitment to the residents of the 4th district of Texas. As he often says he'd rather be respected at home than liked in Washington. With his gentle disposition and strong leadership, I believe he has found a way to do both.

On behalf of the 1st District of Michigan, and my colleagues on the Science Committee, Chairman HALL I thank you for your service to our country and for your leadership on the Committee, and I commend you on this momentous occasion. I look forward to serving with you for many years to come.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chairman RALPH HALL for his leadership on the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; for his decades of selfless service to our country; and for his dedication to this esteemed body.

Today, Chairman HALL became the oldest Member to ever cast a vote in the House of Representatives. He has served in the House for 32 years, occupying the same seat that was once occupied by Speaker Sam Rayburn. RALPH's energy is legendary, second only to his sharp wit, and I hope to have half as much energy as he has when I reach his age.

His service to America started when, as a 19-year-old from Texas, he joined the United States Navy in 1942. Lieutenant HALL served as a pilot for the duration of World War II, and he has never stopped vigorously fighting for our nation.

I look forward to continuing to work with him in the future, and God-willing, he'll be here for 32 more years, continuing to cast every vote the right way.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all of the Members of the House join me in honoring Chairman RALPH HALL for his leadership, his service, and his dedication.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the esteemed career of my friend and colleague RALPH HALL.

Today, RALPH became the oldest known House Member to cast a recorded floor vote. Also the oldest serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives and dean of the Texas delegation, RALPH has charmed friend and foe alike with his good humor and demeanor.

A man of incredible integrity and energy, RALPH has served his district with distinction in Congress for over three decades. A lawyer by trade, RALPH's career in public service began

as a County Judge of Rockwall County, Texas, and he went onto serve in the Texas Senate.

I have served with RALPH on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee and have appreciated his careful attention to the priorities of the Committee members and the science community. As an example, RALPH and I have worked closely to educate Committee members on the benefits of clean coal technologies. Like Illinois, Texas relies on coal for energy production, and our districts and the nation will benefit from technologies that can cleanly and efficiently utilize our most abundant source of energy. I am thankful to RALPH for his commitment to ensuring coal remains a part of a diverse energy portfolio.

Further, I was proud to work with RALPH on important Committee measures, such as reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, which is critical to ensuring America remains a leader in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

Finally, proving time and time again that age has no bounds, I believe RALPH's most daring feat was his 10,000 foot drop from an airplane last August, skydiving at the age of 89. I admire RALPH's courage for taking that leap and see regularly how his bravery and nerve benefit those he serves. He fights daily for the interests of his constituents and they have continued to affirm his contributions to their community for the last 16 terms of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of appreciation to Congressman RALPH HALL for his years of dedicated service to the U.S. House and Texas, and to wish him and his family the very best in the future.

THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY AND JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Texas would like to finish his statement, I would be happy to yield him 5 minutes.

Mr. HALL. I thank the gentleman—and you are a gentleman. You are my friend and I appreciate you.

I just think we need to get together and remember the most important part of all of us is our children and our children's futures. That's why we all get together, and that's the reason for us to change some of the positions we've taken in the past—to try to work something out that the American people expect us to.

You're a gentleman to offer me that. Maybe I've used part of that 5 minutes. Thank you very much.

Mr. GARAMENDI. You had a lot of people speaking to your extraordinary career here, and I didn't want to cut it short. Your advice is sound and, hopefully, taken by all of us.

Mr. HALL. My mother always told me to be silent and be thought a fool rather than to open my mouth and remove all doubt. So I don't want to get to talking too much. It's been too good