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HONORING JOHN MATSUSHIMA

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

Mr. GARDNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. John Matsushima, who will be honored as a Citizen of the West at the National Western Stock Show this coming January. This prestigious award has been presented since 1978, and the selected recipient must embody the spirit and determination of the Western pioneer who is committed to perpetuating the West's agricultural heritage and ideals. I can think of no better person to receive this honor than Dr. Matsushima.

Now 91 years old, he has dedicated his life to teaching others about agriculture and livestock. He began teaching in 1961 at Colorado State University, and he continued to enrich the lives of students until his retirement in 1992. Dr. Matsushima currently holds the title of professor emeritus at Colorado State University, and still spends significant time on campus as an adviser to those who will be future stewards of agriculture.

Among his many honors and awards, Dr. Matsushima received the Japan Emperor award in 2009 and was the first Japanese American to achieve this accomplishment. He has also received national and Colorado 4-H Club awards, the Colorado State University Livestock Leader award, and Colorado State's Best Teacher award.

He is a true pioneer who has committed his life's work to Colorado and to the Western United States. These stories highlight an amazing man, and I am proud to honor Dr. Matsushima on the House floor.

MAINTAIN THE C-130 FLEET

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, this week, conferees met to reach an agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act. As we consider a final agreement, I rise in support of language in the conference report which prevents the movement and retirement of C-130 aircraft.

Madam Speaker, western New York is home to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, which hosts a robust fleet of C-130 aircraft. These aircraft were among the planes used to deliver supplies to the regions of New York and New Jersey in the aftermath of hurricane devastation. Additionally, these western New York aircraft flew over 1,500 missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Representatives KATHLEEN HOCHUL, LOUISE SLAUGHTER, and I wrote to the conferees on this important issue, and we are pleased that the committee agreed to keep in language in the House-passed bill to maintain the C-130 fleet. I encourage the House to support

the conference report language that will maintain the C-130 fleet.

THE TRAGEDY IN NEWTOWN,
CONNECTICUT

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

Mr. OLSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express the sorrow I feel about the tragedy that happened in Newtown, Connecticut, last Friday.

I have a personal connection with Newtown. After being transferred from Texas, my parents were sent to Connecticut, to the corporate headquarters of my father's company. They bought a home in Newtown. My brother graduated from Newtown High School. I would go to Newtown for the holidays. I have driven past Sandy Hook Elementary School—the place where 20 innocent children and six adults were killed by a madman.

As a parent, I cannot imagine the pain the families who lost a child are feeling. From my brief time in Newtown, I saw that it was a true community with strong people. They will go forward, but they need our thoughts, our prayers, and our love.

May God bless them and help them find peace.

MEDICARE IDENTITY THEFT
PREVENTION ACT

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, today the House will consider the Medicare Identity Theft Prevention Act, and I urge my colleagues to support it this afternoon.

Despite actions taken by this House and Federal agencies, Medicare identity theft continues to be a problem. Medicare's own inspector general issued a report stating that more than a quarter-million Medicare beneficiaries are potential victims of identity theft. This is simply unacceptable.

The bill we will consider today makes a commonsense change to Medicare cards that most seniors carry. It will ensure that, in the future, Social Security numbers are not displayed or embedded on these cards, which are issued to every Medicare beneficiary.

Seniors spend their whole lives building financial security for their retirement years. They shouldn't have to worry about losing it if someone steals one's Medicare card.

HONORING THE CAREER OF BOB
MORTON, AN EASTERN WASH-
INGTON LEGEND

(Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. It is with great pride that I rise today to

honor the tremendous service and career of Bob Morton, a 22-year veteran of the Washington State Legislature, who recently announced that he was going to be retiring at the end of the year.

He was first elected to the House in 1990, and then he was appointed to the Senate, where he currently represents the Seventh District, including Pend Oreille, Ferry, Stevens, and parts of Okanogan and Spokane Counties. He owned a small logging business and ran cattle while also preaching at his local church and serving the community.

But Bob is not just an outstanding legislator for eastern Washington; he is also a close friend, a mentor, and the reason that I got into politics and public service in the first place.

As an elected official, I've worked with him on countless issues, and his advice and friendship have been invaluable. He is recognized for his leadership and knowledge of forest health and good forest management. No one knows Western water law better than Bob, and he has participated in most of the negotiations over Washington water law.

Bob and his wife, Linda, have five children and 11 grandchildren, and I know they're looking forward to spending more time with them in their retirement. I wish them the best in their next adventures.

SUPERSTORM SANDY DISASTER
ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

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

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, it has been nearly 8 weeks since Superstorm Sandy struck our shores and devastated an entire region. It has been 8 weeks, and Congress has yet to send a disaster assistance package to the affected States.

It is precedent for this body to stand together in the aftermath of a natural disaster and to immediately provide the necessary assistance in order to help communities recover and rebuild. Two weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast, Congress approved more than \$62 billion in Federal aid. One month after Hurricanes Ike and Gustav hit Texas, Congress approved more than \$20 billion in aid.

Why can't this Congress come together and approve the \$60 billion requested by the President to help the victims of Sandy? The damage done by Sandy is far beyond the resources and capacity that any single State possesses to recover on its own.

It is my hope that this Chamber can set aside its differences and swiftly approve the supplemental funding. Such assistance will aid those who have lost everything in the storm, and it will help to rebuild our communities stronger than ever. New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut have always stood by other regions of this Nation

that have been faced with difficult circumstances. I trust that my colleagues in Congress will now come to our aid.

THE NEWTOWN TRAGEDY AND THE NEED FOR TIGHTER GUN CONTROL

(Ms. TSONGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TSONGAS. Madam Speaker, every corner of America has been deeply affected by the tragic loss of so many lives in Newtown, Connecticut. We mourn for the enormity of grief and for the inconsolable loss visited upon Newtown's families, and we know that our response to Newtown must not and cannot go the way of the many other senseless acts of violence we almost routinely witness. The tragedy in Newtown must be a call to action.

Members from both sides of the aisle have acknowledged that it is time for a conversation about the accessibility of high-capacity weapons in our country and of the culture of violence we live in. This conversation is long overdue, and it is simply not an option to allow this discussion to become stagnant or to be bullied into silence by seemingly untouchable organizations.

America's laws must reasonably control gun manufacturing, sale, and usage. We must act to make real changes that will provide real protection for America's families. In the days to come, let us work together to do just that.

LET US MOURN WITH ACTION

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, you will hear many voices being raised in the backdrop of an unspeakable tragedy from which, even as Members think of it, they cry.

Just a few minutes ago, there was a press conference in which there was probably not a dry eye in that room as Members gave tribute to those lives lost and to those being buried today, and as they spoke of their own anguish, their lost children, and of the loss of their fellow staff members in a gun incident.

So I rise today to say that we must act and can act and can pass legislation even this week. I join with Senator FEINSTEIN's effort and Congressman PERLMUTTER's and Congresswoman MCCARTHY's and that of many others with legislation. I join with the legislation of H.R. 277, that talks about protecting our children, which was introduced by myself. I join with the statement by the Progressive Caucus that speaks about this ammunition, these guns, and mental health. I also join with Dick's Sporting Goods store.

I will just personally say to those who are listening: maybe you'll want to turn in your guns. Oh, no. I am not going to take your guns, but look at

what Dick's Sporting Goods did in the moment they wanted to be part of the solution and a part of America. Let us mourn with action.

God bless those who have lost their lives.

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COMMEMORATING LIFE OF JENNI RIVERA

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and commemorate the life of Mexican American singer Jenni Rivera. Jenni used her powerful voice, soulful singing style, and honest lyrics to create a message that spoke to the resiliency of women.

That powerful voice was silenced forever when she and six others were killed in a plane crash on November 9. Born and raised in Long Beach, California, to immigrant parents from Mexico, Jenni Rivera started her career selling her CDs at flea markets. When she died at the age of 43, Jenni was a top-selling artist, an actress, television producer, and entrepreneur.

Tragically, she was on the cusp of multicultural stardom when she died. She had just finished filming her first film and was in talks with ABC to star in her own sitcom.

Her talent and authenticity shined brightly in a music genre dominated by men. Jenni's lyrics offered a new and refreshing woman's perspective.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the memory of Jenni Rivera and the message of empowerment she gave to millions of women that she spoke for.

IMPLEMENTING THE HIRE ACT

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

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, as more and more of our brave warriors return from Afghanistan, more and more of them are looking for work. It's our duty as a Nation to make sure that we're doing everything possible to get these troops reemployed. That's why I'd like to applaud both the Senate and the House for including in the National Defense Authorization Act the Helping Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Return to Employment, the HIRE Act.

What it does is establish a very commonsense process that encourages State credentialing authorities to consider certain military occupational training when granting licenses. It makes absolutely no sense to force a battlefield medic to spend time and Federal dollars taking redundant training to be an EMT. It makes no sense for a State agency that wouldn't count hundreds of hours driving heavy equipment in Afghanistan to get a CDL li-

cense. The Department of Defense spends \$140 billion a year training our military personnel, the best in the world. It would be ludicrous to not use that investment to get them jobs here at home.

Eight States have already passed legislation to develop the process. I encourage Members of Congress, talk to their State and their Governor to get this done.

FISCAL TURNING POINT

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, as a Nation, we are gaining momentum as our economy gets back on track. For my constituents in San Diego, home prices are on the rise and most employers are adding jobs and hours instead of cutting back. We cannot afford to undo the progress we are making, especially for the middle class.

The only way to accelerate our economic progress is to balance economic development with protection for the most vulnerable Americans from job losses, tax increases, and program cuts. Americans young and old need to know that Congress believes in the future and that we'll work together to keep our country on the rise.

I think often of Gandhi's statement: The future depends on what we do in the present.

Let's not waste this critical opportunity to advance economic growth and invest in our future.

PREVENTING MORE SANDY HOOKS

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, we have experiences in our personal and collective lives that challenge us profoundly, forcing us to search our souls and to change our behavior. Our Nation experienced such a moment on Friday as 20 children were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School, along with six teachers and administrators who were attempting to protect them.

As we mourn and reach out to the families of Newtown, we owe the victims and each other serious consideration of how to prevent more Newtowns and Auroras and Oak Creeks and Tucsons. We must shore up mental health outreach and support, especially for troubled young people. And politically difficult as it may be, we must deal with the instruments of destruction, keeping deadly weapons out of the hands of violent and deranged people and removing weapons of mass killing from our streets.

The horror of Sandy Hook must overcome any temptation to accept the unacceptable or to avoid responsibility for addressing the crying need for change.