

education and treatment efforts across our region. I count it an honor to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Charley in this fight for our communities.

Outside of the courtroom, Charley Greene Dixon has rallied efforts in our schools and communities, as Chairman of the Knox County UNITE Coalition. Through his dedicated support, thousands of young people have had the opportunity to attend drug-free events like, Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs, a prevention camp, as well as faith-based walks, parades, along with basketball and cheerleading programs. He has undoubtedly inspired countless young people to break the cycle of addiction in their families, encouraging them to dream big and to accomplish great things through a life of sobriety.

Additionally, Charley has worked diligently to obtain several instrumental grants for Knox County, including a victim advocate grant, a truancy prevention grant, and an environmental PRIDE award. Those grant dollars have been vital to the growth, security, and health of area communities.

Despite his battle with cancer, Charley's passion for progress in Knox County is still holding strong. He continues to serve as a member of the Knox County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and President of the region's Bar Association. He is also very active in his church, serving as an usher for the past 15 years and a trustee for two years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring a champion for southern Kentucky, Charley Greene Dixon, Jr. His recognition as the Knox County Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year is duly warranted and I wish Charley the very best in the years to come.

#### MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

#### HON. ALAN NUNNELEE

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 29, 2013*

Mr. NUNNELEE. Mr. Speaker, Mississippi College, the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of Mississippi and the second oldest Baptist university in the United States, recently celebrated the opening of its 187th school year. Mississippi College has since pre-Civil War days provided students from across the state and around the world an education informed by Christian values, and was the first co-educational institution in the nation to grant a degree to a woman.

The university has a long and distinguished history of educating future public servants, counting current leaders in federal and state government among her alumna, including current Third Congressional District Rep. Gregg Harper, and current Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant. As a member of the Board of Trustees I am also proud to recognize the leadership of Order of the Golden Arrow recipient Gayle Wicker has provided to the university's presidents through the years. Mississippi College, located in Clinton, is a proud constituent of the Second Congressional District represented by Rep. Bennie Thompson.

For 64 years, students have received exemplary training in areas of speech, media, public relations, theater and related practices in the Mississippi College Communication Depart-

ment. Founded in 1949 by Drs. Hollis and Julia Todd as the Department of Speech, the current Communication Department presented diplomas to hundreds of students who have subsequently experienced personal and career success in their chosen fields. Among its alumni, the department prides itself by seeing former graduates become leaders in fields as diverse as business and ministry, education and journalism.

The faculty of the Mississippi College Communication Department embodies dedicated and sustained service to the university and its mission. In fact, only three men have chaired the department over the span of its 64 years: Dr. Hollis Todd, Dr. Billy Lytal, for whom the annual student scholarship fund is named, and current chair Dr. Cliff Fortenberry. With a teaching philosophy built around the practical application of theory and curriculum, departmental faculty are teachers first, individuals who view their service at Mississippi College as an investment in their students' lives and in their community.

The Mississippi College Communication Department currently enrolls undergraduates in interpersonal and public communication, journalism, mass media, public relations, and theater concentrations, and offers graduate degrees in journalism, health services communication, professional communication in sports, and public relations and corporate communication. Leading in innovative online classroom offerings, the communication department partners with other academic departments to offer unique degree programs to meet student and market demands.

With a current enrollment of over 5,000 students and future leaders, Mississippi College seeks to be known as a university recognized for academic excellence and commitment to the cause of Christ. The faculty, staff, students and alumni of the Mississippi College Communication Department are proud to fulfill this vision as the department enters its 65th year of service.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF HURRI- CANE SANDY

#### HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 29, 2013*

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reflect on the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, which made landfall one year ago.

Super Storm Sandy was the second largest natural disaster in our nation's history and the second costliest. New York State alone incurred \$32.8 billion in damage, \$8.4 billion of which was on Long Island. 305,000 homes and 265,300 businesses in the state were damaged or destroyed. While these numbers are shocking, they don't begin to tell the story of the suffering my constituents experienced.

This devastation was exacerbated by the failure of Congress to provide immediate aid to the affected communities. The Northeast was forced to wait more than three months for a federal aid package, thereby delaying the region's recovery. Fortunately, this assistance is beginning to flow and communities are in the process of rebuilding.

While we have made progress, the road to recovery remains long and difficult. Thousands

of New York and New Jersey residents are still displaced and others are living in partially repaired homes. Infrastructure throughout the region awaits repair and needs to be hardened. I am confident that with the continued commitment of state and federal partners, our communities will rebound and come out stronger than ever.

#### TRIBUTE TO JOHN AND MARY PAPPAJOHN

#### HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 29, 2013*

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor John and Mary Pappajohn for being the named the 2013 recipients of Eli and Edythe Broad Award for Philanthropy in the Arts at the National Arts Awards ceremony.

In celebration of National Arts and Humanities Month, Americans for the Arts organizes the National Arts Awards each October to recognize the achievements of individuals and corporations who have exhibited outstanding leadership in the arts, arts education and philanthropy. Accordingly, the Eli and Edythe Broad Award for Philanthropy is reserved for individuals who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment of philanthropic generosity to one or more major arts institutions.

The selection of the Pappajohns to receive such a prestigious award should come as no surprise to those that know this incredible couple and their love of the arts. John served on the board of directors of the Des Moines Art Center and continues to be an honorary trustee, while his wife serves as the head of the museum's Acquisition Committee and has continued to serve as an active trustee for nearly two decades. Together they have donated several works of art to the museum, including those that comprise the beloved sculpture park in downtown Des Moines. They have also been members of the National Committee of Performing Arts of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC for more than two decades and continually rank among the top art collectors in the world.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. and Mrs. Pappajohn's lifelong commitment to philanthropy at the local, state, and national levels cannot be overstated. John and Mary's selfless contributions have changed countless lives for the better and I cannot imagine a more deserved selection for this prestigious award. It is a great honor to represent John and Mary in the United States Congress and I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating them for this momentous recognition and thanking them for their continued dedication to their community and our nation.

#### WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

#### HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 23, 2013*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 3080) to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes:

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2013. As the Senior Texan on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and cosponsor of this legislation, I am glad to once again be addressing water resources legislation on the House Floor. Such legislation has not been passed by this esteemed Body since 2007, when I served as Chairwoman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee that helped craft and usher the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 into law over a presidential veto. With this background, I understand the challenge of composing and advancing such legislation to this point. I applaud the leadership demonstrated by the Chairman and Ranking Members of both the Full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee for bringing this bill to the Floor today.

While I ultimately support the passage of this legislation, I am concerned about the weakening of environmental protections and the ability of the public to participate in that process as a result of the streamlining provisions of this bill. The Army Corps of Engineers project construction backlog and astronomical figure it carries demonstrates that project efficiency must be improved. I understand the desire to expedite Army Corps of Engineers study and project completions, yet do not believe that the environmental safeguards such as the National Environmental Policy Act are the cause of those delays. If properly funded, necessary projects can be completed with appropriate environmental considerations. I am discouraged that environmental protections are being weakened under this guise.

As Co-Chair of the Texas Maritime Caucus, I have supported language in this bill to increase commercial navigation capabilities for Texas' ports and waterways. I am excited about Texas' ports and the role that they play in cultivating the Texas economy, the National economy, and the global economy. With expansive coastlines, established intermodal infrastructure, and strategically beneficial location, maritime commerce has a bright future in Texas. Moreover, the American economy has a brighter future because of Texas' transportation investments and capabilities.

I am glad to have worked in a bipartisan fashion to include language in this legislation for an assessment of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. This assessment will be a valuable tool for the State of Texas to determine its current and future operation and maintenance needs for navigation improvements to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, allowing it to be utilized more efficiently and productively in maritime commerce.

Further, I supported the inclusion of projects at the Sabine-Neches Waterway, Texas and at Freeport Harbor, Texas—both of which are authorized in this legislation. The Sabine-Neches Waterway project will contribute to the economic effectiveness of commercial navigation in a system of navigation channels in the Sabine-Neches estuary of Texas and Louisiana. The Freeport Harbor project provides

for a deep-draft waterway from the Gulf of Mexico to the City of Freeport through the original mouth of the Brazos River. It will contribute to the economic efficiency of commercial navigation in the region and will significantly improve Freeport Harbor's ability to compete in international maritime commerce.

These projects will help bring nearly a billion dollars of Federal funds to Texas' ports and waterways. In turn, these improvements will be a boon for Texas' economy and the National economy. Further, with the expansion of the Panama Canal, these improvements will allow Texas' ports to play an increased role in the global economy. The increased economic benefit and movement of goods will be felt throughout Texas, including in my home district in Dallas, home to two Class One rail lines, an intermodal facility, numerous interstate highways, and a strong consumer marketplace.

It is my hope that the passage of this legislation will revive the biannual WRDA authorization schedule. Monitoring the streamlining provisions of this bill, as well as assessing the expenditures of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund will be ripe for reconsideration during the next Congress—as will many other issues. It is my belief that the overall objectives and purposes of water resources legislation are vital to America and should be considered on a biannual basis. The importance of this bill should not be lost in politics.

In closing, I want to once again thank the Chairman and Ranking Members of both the Full Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee for their leadership in advancing this legislation to the floor today.

#### VULNERABLE VETERANS HOUSING REFORM ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

**HON. DEREK KILMER**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 28, 2013*

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1742, the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013.

Our country enjoys unparalleled freedom because of the commitment and sacrifice of our troops. I believe that if you serve our country, we should have your back. That means ensuring that military families and veterans have access to the full level of benefits they have earned.

Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that the aid and assistance we provide to our heroes and their families, would end up diminishing housing benefits. Treating this allocation as part of the income calculation to determine HUD benefits could lead to an increase in homelessness. Why force our heroes to choose between the care they require and the shelter they need?

H.R. 1742 clarifies that the benefits earned by our military retirees shall remain used to the purposes provided—and that assistance for caring for the disabled shall not jeopardize the ability to get the housing and shelter they require.

Again I am proud to support the Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013 and urge my colleagues to do the same. Let's con-

tinue our commitment to our veterans. Let us do what we can to honor their service and sacrifices. With more and more servicemen transitioning to veteran status, it's critical that we protect the benefits they have earned in service to their country.

#### ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE THE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

SPEECH OF

**HON. LOIS FRANKEL**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 28, 2013*

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the veterans' disability claims backlog is simply unacceptable. American service members who risk their lives to protect our freedoms should not have to wonder if they will receive the basic benefits they deserve. Today, more than 405,000 veterans are waiting for their benefits in this tragically backlogged system. These aren't just numbers. These are real people—heroes who served our country.

Take for example Jeff Colaicovo, a veteran living in my district in South Florida. Jeff received two Purple Hearts for his courageous service during the Vietnam War. He sacrificed for his country, and unbelievably, our claims system failed him.

Until his case was brought to my office's attention earlier this year, Jeff had made little progress towards receiving the benefits he has earned. In fact, he and his wife spent over two years struggling with bills that his benefits should have helped cover. Finally, after reaching out to my office, Jeff began receiving his far-overdue benefits in June. Jeff, along with all of our nation's veterans, deserves better.

Thankfully, today, we took an important step towards helping our veterans by passing H.R. 2189.

Part of the reason veterans often wait so long for their benefits decisions is that the average number of conditions afflicting our veterans has grown significantly. This was true for Jeff whose conditions include PTSD, loss of hearing, irregular heartbeat, and severe back problems. In fact, our service members currently returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan submit an average of 8.5 separate conditions, whereas WWII veterans typically submitted less than three.

Under the current system, each medical condition is individually adjudicated and the veteran only begins receiving benefits once the entire claim has been processed.

H.R. 2189 will address this issue by requiring the Veterans Administration to pay benefits as each element of a veteran's claim is reviewed, rather than when the entire package has been processed. This would allow veterans to begin receiving benefits checks much sooner.

While much more still needs to be done, this is an important step to help repair a broken system.