

for President Obama's willingness to express concern about my husband and the other imprisoned Americans in Iran during his recent phone conversation with Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, I was devastated to learn that the Administration didn't even ask for my husband's release when directly seated across the table from the leaders of the government that holds him captive. My husband is suffering because he is a Christian. He is suffering because he is an American. Yet, his own government at least the Executive and diplomatic representatives has abandoned him. Don't we owe it to him as a nation to stand up for his human rights, for his freedom?"

Secretary Kerry acknowledged that he had not done so—confirming the awful report that Naghmeh had already heard.

Pastor Abedini remains imprisoned in Iran, sharing a cell with violent criminals who have more than once surrounded Pastor Abedini as he tried to sleep, wielding knives and threatening his life.

Saeed Abedini is an American citizen. He went to Iran last year to build an orphanage for Iranian children. He had been arrested in Iran before, but released and told he could enter and exit the country for humanitarian aid work if he agreed to cease pastoring house churches.

As Pastor Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, testified last week, he accepted that proposal—but Iran did not uphold its end of the agreement.

Abedini was arrested in July 2012, imprisoned, and tried for sharing his religious beliefs and thereby supposedly undermining the security of Iran.

He was denied contact with his attorney until just before the trial. The trial was not public, and he and his attorney were barred from participating in key portions of the trial—following which a judge sentenced him to 8 years in prison. His appeals have been denied.

In prison, he has been repeatedly beaten, denied medical care, and held in solitary confinement. While nuclear talks played out on the world stage—Iran moved Pastor Abedini to a prison notorious for housing the worst criminals in Iran, Rajai Shahr.

The very fact that Pastor Abedini was moved to a dangerous prison in the middle of negotiations confirms that the Iranians recognized him as a potential factor in the negotiations. Since August of 2012, the United States has reportedly released four Iranians, including most recently a high-ranking scientist, who were imprisoned in the U.S. for sanctions violations.

Speaking for myself, I question whether these releases are unrelated to the nuclear talks.

Yet American citizen Saeed Abedini remains in a hell-hole prison in Iran.

The U.S. government must not waste another opportunity to secure the release of Pastor Abedini—his case needs to be front and center in the next round of U.S.-Iranian negotiations. Time is running out. Naghmeh, Rebecca, and Jacob need their husband and father home.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE  
2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN  
COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD  
DISTRICT OF TEXAS

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants, and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Colonel Richard H. Graham served in the United States Air Force from 1964 to 1989. He entered pilot training at Craig Air Force Base in Alabama. Once he graduated he remained at Craig AFB as a T-37 instructor pilot and flight examiner. In 1970, Mr. Graham was assigned to the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Udom Air Force Base in Thailand. During this time he flew 145 combat missions over North Vietnam and Laos in F-4C/D/E aircraft. He ended his military career honorably with more than 4,600 flying hours.

For his years of distinguished service, Mr. Graham received numerous decorations including a Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with 18 Oak Leaf Clusters, and an Air Force Outstanding Unity Award with Valor.

Mr. Graham has continued to serve since his retirement from the military. He is actively involved in many charities and contributes his time and life experiences giving motivational speeches around the country. His main charitable work is through the four books he wrote on the SR-71. He donates the royalties from these books to aviation museums including the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in D.C. and the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas.

Colonel Richard Graham, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service to our country and community both past and present. It is my pleasure to award you the 2013 Congressional Veteran Commendation for the Third District of Texas.

HONORING LINDA CRAYTON

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of Linda Crayton as we celebrate over 40 years of her dedicated service to the community and her wide reaching accomplishments. Ms. Crayton is an outstanding individual, who throughout her distinguished career has cham-

ioned public private partnerships, led efforts for gender equality, advocated for justice in her community, and supported our youth.

Ms. Crayton's esteemed career has spanned over four decades as an employee of Comcast, where she is currently the San Francisco Regional Senior Director of Government Relations. Along the way, she has been a staunch advocate for the advancement of women by leading efforts with Black Women Organized for Political Action, California Women Lead, EMERGE, Women In Cable and Telecommunications, and 100 Black Women of the Bay Area, Inc. Ms. Crayton has been recognized numerous times for her commitment to gender equality. The San Francisco League of Women Voters accorded Ms. Crayton "The Woman Who Could Be President" award in 2001. In 2006, she was named "Woman of the Year" for the 9th senatorial district by California State Senator and President Pro-Tempore Don Perata, as well as "Corporate Woman of the Year" by 100 Black Women, Inc. In 2011, Ms. Crayton was recognized by the National Women's History Month with a History Makers Award.

Among her many contributions, Ms. Crayton has tirelessly served her community and church as a civil rights leader. She has worked with the NAACP, Urban League, and countless other community justice organizations. She also supports the East Oakland Youth Development Center, Oakland Boys and Girls Club, and the Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation. For her tremendous commitment to the community, she has been recognized by the San Francisco African American Chamber with a "Lifetime Achievement" award and by the National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC) as a Black History Month—Living Legend. In 2007, the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Committee and the Bayview Hunters Point Family Resource Center further honored Ms. Crayton with a "Distinguished Community Service Award," and a "Humanitarian Award," respectively.

Moreover, Ms. Crayton boasts an impressive commitment to local government. In 1996, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown first appointed her to the San Francisco Airports Commission, a role that she has been appointed to by successive San Francisco mayors continuously till this day. She has worked hard to ensure that San Francisco International Airport is the best run, cleanest, and most welcoming airport in the world.

Additionally, Ms. Crayton provided much needed support and leadership to the restructuring of the San Francisco Department of Health in her capacity as President of the San Francisco District V Mental Health Board. For these efforts she was recognized by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors with the prestigious Leadership Award.

Throughout her prolific career, Ms. Crayton has not only been a hardworking professional, but also a compassionate and generous individual. She has been a mentor for countless men and women throughout the years, taking them under her wing to help them grow professionally and pursue job opportunities.

Therefore, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, Ms. Linda Crayton, I salute you. Your many years of service have made an indelible mark in our community. Best wishes to you and your loved ones in the years to come.

HONORING THE MOTOR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT FOR THEIR EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut for their many efforts to combat human trafficking, including their most recent action in honoring Kendis Paris and "Truckers Against Trafficking" with their highest honor, the "Good Buddy Award."

As you know, each year hundreds of thousands of women and children are abducted and forced into prostitution and enslaved under some of the most abusive of circumstances. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has identified truck stops and rest areas as places where these abductions can occur. The Motor Transportation Association of Connecticut (MTAC), an organization dedicated to promoting the interests of Connecticut's trucking industry, has taken a leadership role in the national effort to combat this terrible epidemic. Truckers are the eyes and ears of our nation's highways—indeed just this past July, in one weekend, with the help of truckers and others, more than 100 teenagers were rescued. The leadership and members of MTAC have taken a special interest in this cause, making it a top priority.

At their most recent annual meeting, MTAC demonstrated their commitment to this effort by recognizing "Truckers Against Trafficking," a national non-profit organization that exists to educate, equip, empower and mobilize members of the trucking and travel plaza industry to combat domestic sex trafficking, and its co-founder, Kendis Paris, with their 2013 Good Buddy Award—a demonstration of the high level of esteem that MTAC holds for both the program and Kendis. I am proud to say that, in addition to these actions, MTAC has been working with me to develop a legislative agenda focused on combatting human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a rampant issue that is impacting the lives of millions across the world, hundreds of thousands in our nation alone. I applaud the Motor Transport Association of Connecticut, Truckers Against Trafficking, and Kendis Paris for their remarkable work in combating this appalling practice. I look forward to continuing to work with them and to someday realize the goal we all share—to ensure that every woman and child is protected from such a dreadful fate.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

**HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

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and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great Nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Sergeant Major Daniel Huff served in the United States Marine Corps from 1981 to 2010. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, starting his career at Boot Camp and Administrative Clerk School. In 1983, then-Corporal Huff was transferred to the United Nations Command in Seoul, South Korea, where he earned his first Navy Achievement Medal. He was then assigned to the Inspector-Instructor Staff, 25th Marines, in Massachusetts and earned his promotion to Sergeant.

Later on in his career, Mr. Huff served as Senior Drill Instructor to mold young men into exemplary character with traits of honorable service to God and country and then as Administrative Chief to several Marine bases, the last being in Quantico, Virginia. He served in Operation Iraqi Freedom I and II, earning the Meritorious Service Medal and Bronze Star with Combat V Medal for heroic actions in intense combat situations. For instance, on April 14, 2004 in Karabilah, Iraq, a roadside bomb exploded and enemy fire unleashed on all sides of the Battalion Commander's convoy. During this attack, Mr. Huff provided first-aid to a critically wounded Marine while simultaneously returning fire. He then ensured the medical evacuation of 22 other wounded comrades and led the Marines to secure the medical evacuation route. During the following five days, the Battalion destroyed over 80 enemy insurgents, safeguarding the city from an attempted takeover by anti-Iraqi Forces. Mr. Huff's extensive career and numerous decorations only scratch the surface of his exemplary leadership, dedication, and sacrifice.

Currently, Mr. Huff works for Dyncorp International in Fort Worth, Texas, where he oversees approximately 10,000 to 11,000 personnel at the Afghanistan base. He also volunteers in the community with the Toys for Tots Program, as a USMC JROTC mini-boot camp program supervisor, and represents the Marine Corps in various community events around the DFW metroplex.

Sergeant Major Daniel Huff, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service to our country and community both past and present. It is my pleasure to award you the 2013 Congressional Veteran Commendation for the Third District of Texas.

OCEAN ENERGY SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

**HON. RUSH HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the Ocean Energy Safety and Technology Improvement Act of 2013, a bill to fa-

cilitate the development and use of technology to make offshore drilling safer for workers and the environment.

A little more than three and a half years ago, the Deepwater Horizon exploded and sank off the coast of Louisiana, killing eleven workers, and allowing its unfinished well to pour millions of barrels of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico until it was finally capped several months later. This event—the greatest single environmental disaster in American history—exposed as a myth the idea that such tragic offshore events, such as the Montara explosion in Australia, the Piper Alpha disaster in the North Sea, or the Ixtoc blowout in Mexico, could not happen in the United States.

There was no question that the industry had gotten complacent. And the regulators had gotten complacent. And even Congress had gotten complacent. The only debate before the Deepwater Horizon tragedy was where drilling should occur, not how safe it would be. Those of us whose states depend on clean beaches and clear water to fuel a multi-billion dollar tourism industry were assured that technology had reached the point that there was no risk whatsoever: that offshore drilling could coexist with clean beaches, that vacationers and merchants would never have to fear oil-soaked seabirds dying on their shores, or tarballs staining the coasts for years to come.

Those assurances, we learned in April 2010, were completely false. The technology the industry boasted of was about drilling deeper and faster, not about being cleaner or safer. And while there is a requirement in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act for companies to use the "best available and safest technology," in reality companies were allowed to simply meet regulatory minimums. The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, or BSEE, recently proposed to close that loophole and ensure that companies really are using the best and safest technology; naturally that proposal was met with the predictable wails from industry.

But despite those complaints, this is clearly an idea whose time has come. In October, the National Academy of Sciences released a report with recommendations on how to implement a true requirement for using the best available and safest technology available in the offshore industry. The Academy endorsed BSEE's formation of an Ocean Energy Safety Institute, but said that the institute needed more funding, more stability, and more authority.

That is what my legislation does. It adopts the National Academy's recommendations by giving BSEE the authority to stand up a robust, permanent Ocean Energy Safety Institute with a steady source of funding. The Institute will facilitate collaboration between academia, regulators, and industry, serve as a center of excellence for offshore safety research and education, and most importantly, help BSEE identify the best available and safest technologies currently in use, and facilitate the development of better and safer technologies.

This legislation also implements other recommendations from the Academy, including providing the authority for the review of drilling plans and permits to be prioritized if they would use particularly innovative safety technologies, and promoting safety research by small businesses, where many of the best innovations arise.