

While Ms. Erickson is an exceptional educator, she credits her success and achievements to the amazing students she has had the privilege of teaching. The most rewarding aspect of her profession is that she is able to watch her students grow as they learn.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Heather Erickson as the Okaloosa County, Florida Teacher of the Year and thank her for her commitment to service to Northwest Florida. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating Ms. Erickson, and we wish her all the best.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, February 26, 2013, I missed rollcall votes 48, 49, and 50 for unavoidable reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall No. 48: "nay" (On motion to adjourn.); Rollcall No. 49: "yea" (On motion to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 77, the Academic Competition Resolution of 2013.); Rollcall No. 50: "yea" (On approving the Journal).

HONORING THE LIFE OF RAYMOND MINNITE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay to tribute to the life of Raymond Minnite, who lived a long and fulfilling life of 95 years. As founder of the town of Three Rocks in California, Raymond was a true supporter and advocate for our Central Valley. His kind heart and generosity will be greatly missed.

Raymond was born into a large family with nine brothers and sisters. His parents were first generation immigrants from Italy. Growing up in an immigrant family of 12, Raymond quickly developed great values and principles. He knew the importance of treating others with respect, compassion, and consideration. Raymond's charitable acts were witnessed by many because helping those in need was essential to him.

As a young man, Raymond served in the Army in World War II. He was stationed in Germany, Italy, and France. Raymond did not discuss the brutalities of war with his family and friends. Instead he shared about the times when he would take extra food to the hungry children. Raymond's positive outlook on life was apparent to all of those around him.

After Raymond married Bernadette and they had their children: Gary, Jack, Bernadette, Janis, Dion, and John, he purchased 20 acres of land at the intersection of Clarkson and Highway 33. There was nothing built on the land, but he had a vision. Bernadette believed in his plan, so he had his families support. Raymond's boys took part in the project and helped him salvage old wood and nails. Slowly a small town was built, and Raymond named it Three Rocks. Surrounded by farming communities, it serves a place for farm laborers to

live. Today, Three Rocks has about 230 residents.

Raymond had an ingenious idea, and he made it into a reality. He truly achieved the "American Dream." Raymond's children, 17 grandchildren, and 31 great-grandchildren have an outstanding role model that they will hold in their hearts forever.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to the life of Raymond Minnite. His presence will be greatly missed, but his legacy will surely live on in Fresno County.

HONORING DONALD AND BARBARA HORAN

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my constituents, Donald and Barbara Horan of Greensburg, Indiana.

Don and Barb were married and actively involved in their church and community. After working with several local businesses, Don acquired Collection Associates Incorporated and developed it into a thriving business. Don served on the Decatur County Fair Board, Greensburg Redevelopment Board, and the Decatur County Community Foundation. Barb volunteered with Tri Kappa and the Decatur county YMCA Board, among others. They were both actively involved in St. Mary's Catholic Church and the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

Don and Barb will forever be remembered as devoted parents to their daughters and lifelong friends of their community. I ask the entire 6th Congressional District to keep their four daughters Rebecca, Olivia, Regan, and Adrienne, along with the entire extended Horan family, in your thoughts and prayers.

OPPOSITION TO SEQUESTRATION

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to sequestration. I am appalled by the complete and utter abdication of leadership and responsibility by Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans to bring a bill to the House Floor that would replace the catastrophic and needless sequester.

Early this week, President Obama reminded us of the untold damage that the automatic, across-the-board spending cuts would inflict on our fragile economy, on the lives of working families, children, students, and on our military. I am outraged that House Republicans would stand idly by and allow these disastrous, self-inflicted cuts to go into effect causing between one and two million people to lose their jobs. We should be adopting policies that create jobs, instead of succumbing to policies that eliminate jobs.

California residents cannot afford another GOP-manufactured crisis. That is why, on behalf of all the residents of California, and es-

pecially the residents of the 51st Congressional District, I have joined with my colleagues to call on the House Republican leadership to do what is right for our Nation's economy, security and families and take action this week on a balanced plan to avert these damaging and mindless spending cuts.

The Office of Management and Budget released a report earlier this week that substantiates many of the devastating and widespread impacts that sequestration will have on local communities in California, several of which are included below:

Military Readiness and Jobs: In California, approximately 64,000 civilian Department of Defense employees would be furloughed, reducing gross pay by around \$399.4 million in total. My district includes portions of San Diego, which has one of the largest military presences in the Nation and is the headquarters for the Navy Region Southwest. These cuts to defense spending will cause the maintenance and repair of ships and aircraft to be cancelled, putting at risk the safety and security of our men and women in uniform. As nearly 25% of the jobs in San Diego County are directly connected to the defense industry, these brutal cuts will cause extraordinary harm to the struggling economy and put thousands of jobs at risk.

Job Search Assistance: Around 130,000 fewer Californians will get the help and skills they need to find employment as California will lose about \$3.3 million for job search assistance, referral, and placement. My district includes Imperial County which suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates in the Nation, nearly 30%. My constituents cannot afford to lose critical employment assistance.

Nutrition for Seniors: California would lose approximately \$5.4 million to help provide meals for seniors. Many of our seniors live on limited fixed incomes and rely on these programs to help provide basic necessities. We cannot sit here on our hands and allow our seniors to go hungry.

Child Care: Up to 2,000 disadvantaged and vulnerable children could lose access to child care, which is also essential for working parents to hold down a job.

Vaccines for Children: In California around 15,810 fewer children will receive vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, and Hepatitis B due to reduced funding for vaccinations. It is callous and unacceptable to put the health and safety of our children at risk.

Public Health: California will lose approximately \$2.6 million to help upgrade its ability to respond to public health threats including infectious diseases, natural disasters, and biological, chemical, nuclear, and radiological events. In addition, California will lose about \$12.4 in grants to help prevent and treat substance abuse, resulting in around 9,400 fewer admissions to substance abuse programs. And the California State Department of Public Health will lose about \$2 million resulting in around 49,300 fewer HIV tests.

Teachers and Schools: California will lose approximately \$87.6 million for primary and secondary education, putting around 1,210 teacher and aide jobs at risk. In addition about 187,000 fewer students would be served and approximately 320 fewer schools would receive funding.

Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start services would be eliminated for approximately 8,200 children in California, reducing

access to critical early education. Many of my constituents rely on this crucial service to help bridge the education gap.

Education for Children with Disabilities: California will lose approximately \$62.9 million for about 760 teachers, aides, and staff who help children with disabilities.

College Aid and Work-Study Jobs: Around 9,600 fewer low income students in California, many from my district, would receive aid to help them finance the costs of college and around 3,690 fewer students will get work-study jobs that help them pay for college.

Law Enforcement and Public Safety Funds: California will lose about \$1.6 million in Justice Assistance Grants that support law enforcement, prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, and crime victim and witness initiatives.

Violence Against Women Grants: California could lose up to \$795,000 to provide services to victims of domestic violence, resulting in up to 3,000 fewer victims being served.

Protections for Clean Air and Clean Water: California would lose about \$12.4 million to ensure clean water and air quality, as well as prevent pollution from pesticides and hazardous waste. My district relies on this essential funding to help mitigate the pollution that drifts across the United States-Mexico border.

The most egregious part of the House Republicans' dereliction of legislative duty, is that over the last several months, both Senate and House Democrats have offered fair, balanced plans to avert these damaging cuts. These proposals are built on responsible spending cuts, increased revenues, and job growth.

Yesterday, Representative CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee, fought valiantly to bring a fair and balanced plan to replace the sequester to the floor. His reasonable and responsible plan would have eliminated tax loopholes and adopted the "Buffet Rule" to make sure that wealthy Americans pay their fair share.

Yet House Republicans have adamantly refused to work toward a compromise to reduce the deficit because they refuse to ask the wealthy to pay a little more by closing tax loopholes that benefit the privileged few. Republicans are blissfully content to continue to place millions of jobs at risk, threaten the health and security of middle class families, and put the safety of neighborhoods across the Nation in jeopardy.

I call on my colleagues, the House Republicans, to immediately bring legislation to the floor that would replace the sequester with a balanced plan and protect our Nation's military, working families, seniors, and children from these devastating and unwarranted cuts.

RECOGNIZING MELISSA DICESARE AS THE 2012-2013 WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Melissa Dicesare as the 2012-2013 Walton County, Florida Teach-

er of the Year. For more than thirteen years, Ms. Dicesare has been an inspiration to her students, her colleagues, and her community, and I am honored to recognize her success and myriad of achievements.

After earning a bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education and master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of West Florida, Ms. Dicesare joined the Northwest Florida school system as an English teacher at Fort Walton Beach High School for three years. Ms. Dicesare then joined Niceville Senior High School for eight years and eventually South Walton High School, where she currently serves as an English teacher and Leadership Sponsor.

Teachers are among our nation's most valuable public servants. They are responsible for helping mentor our students and for ensuring that our youth have the proper tools they need to succeed. It is unquestionable that Ms. Dicesare values the important influence and role teachers play in the lives of their students. To Ms. Dicesare, being a teacher is about being a positive force in bettering the lives of her students and always inspiring them to strive for excellence. She challenges her students to think critically. She emphasizes the importance of building a strong character with integrity and resolve, and she speaks of the importance of becoming productive members of society. Aside from her students, Ms. Dicesare mentors young aspiring teachers, and by sharing her wisdom and experience with her fellow colleagues, Ms. Dicesare improves the quality of her own classroom, as well as the entire school.

In addition to being named Walton County, Florida Teacher of the Year, Ms. Dicesare has previously earned recognition as the Okaloosa County, Florida First Year Teacher of the Year; Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award; Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction; United States Achievement Academy Leadership Award; Beta Club Helping Hand Award; 2005 Niceville High School Outstanding Educator Award; and 2000-2008 Who's Who Among America's Teachers.

Ms. Dicesare's unbridled compassion and enthusiasm exemplify the essential characteristics of a successful teacher. They are evidenced by the numerous accolades she has received, and the impact of her achievements is alive in the hearts and minds of the students who have been deeply affected by her unwavering dedication.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Melissa Dicesare as the Walton County, Florida Teacher of the Year and thank her for her leadership and commitment to service to Northwest Florida. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating Ms. Dicesare, and we wish her all the best.

RECOGNITION OF THE 2012 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESERVE FAMILY READINESS AWARD FOR THE NAVAL OPERATIONS SUPPORT CENTER IN TUCSON, AZ

HON. RON BARBER

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Naval Operations Support Center in

Tucson, Arizona, which has been awarded the 2012 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Award.

The Reserve Family Readiness Award was established in 2000 to recognize the dedication of our Reserve and National Guard units to their military families. Winners of the Reserve Family Readiness Award are those units deemed to have the best programs in support of military families. As we can all agree, our military families are critical to total force readiness and deserve to be a top priority.

The care and support of the military family must be a paramount endeavor, especially for a nation that has been at war for over a decade. Family readiness directly impacts force readiness and provides the critical link that enables our service members to complete the mission without having to worry about the well-being of their loved ones back home. Family support systems improve the quality of life and increase morale for those on the homefront. They educate families on military benefits and entitlements, and in times of need can respond quickly and provide assistance. In this regard, the Naval Operations Support Center in Tucson has proven its commitment to its service members and their families.

Last year, the Naval Operations Support Center in Tucson competed against 131 stellar naval commands taking top honors in the category of family readiness. It is my honor to thank them for their service to our country and congratulate them on being selected for the 2012 Department of Defense Reserve Family Readiness Award. Fleet, Family, Fitness!

HONORING BEN GILLILAND

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Ben Gilliland. Ben is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Royal Rangers and earning the most prestigious award of the Gold Medal of Achievement.

Ben has taken an active part with the Royal Rangers through his church, Blue Springs Assembly in Blue Springs, Missouri. The Royal Rangers provide young men the character development and leadership formation needed to thrive in today's world. Attaining the Gold Medal of Achievement demonstrates Ben's dedication and commitment to the Royal Rangers. I am sure that Ben will continue to hold such high standards in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Ben Gilliland for his accomplishments with the Royal Rangers and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of the Gold Medal of Achievement.