

Known as the leader of millions of Greeks living outside of Greece, Mr. Athens served as the President of the World Council of Hellenes Abroad, SAE, since its founding in 1995. In 2006, Mr. Athens was named President Emeritus by the Sixth World Assembly of SAE.

Since its founding, SAE has worked to promote Hellenism, support the efforts of the Greeks worldwide, and strengthen ties between Greece and the countries of residence of Greek expatriates.

During his tenure with SAE, Mr. Athens has travelled to every continent to further SAE's mission. He also worked closely with other notable Hellenes in the Coordinated Effort of Hellenes. He has met with nearly every U.S. President and leader in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on Hellenic and Orthodox issues. It is with Mr. Athens' care and dedication that SAE has thrived.

Mr. Athens was also a proud founder of Hellenicare, a Primary Health Care Initiative and humanitarian effort. Under his direction, a total of seven medical care centers were opened in Hellenic areas of the Republic of Albania, Armenia, Georgia, and Ukraine. These centers provide free medical services for those who would otherwise have no access to high quality medical treatment.

A decorated U.S. Army Captain, Mr. Athens was honored with the Bronze Star and the U.S. Army Commendation Medal for his service in World War II. He has also led a successful career in business, founding the Metron Steel Corporation, which continues to be one of the largest steelworks in the country.

Mr. Athens has been honored with more than 42 awards, medals and distinctions for his service to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize my friend Andrew A. Athens for his remarkable service and his lifelong commitment to enriching the lives of others. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring his tremendous accomplishments.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2009, the day I took office, the national debt was \$10,627,961,295,930.67.

Today, it is \$16,723,061,528,495.80. We've added \$6,095,100,232,565.13 to our debt in 4 years. This is \$6 trillion in debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a Balanced Budget Amendment. We must stop this unconscionable accumulation of debt.

CHELSEY BOCK

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Chelsey Bock for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Chelsey Bock

is a 12th grader at Standley Lake High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Chelsey Bock is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Chelsey Bock for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the extraordinary merit of the Seattle Seahawks today, March 18, 2013.

The Seattle Seahawks finished the 2012 season with an overall record of 11–5, including a perfect home field record of 8–0 in an entertaining season. Included in their 11–5 record, they dominated with back to back 50 point games against their opponents.

They advanced to the playoffs, winning the NFC wild card and fighting through two rollercoaster playoff games—the spirit of the “12th man” supporting and driving them forward. With six Seahawks players, one being their rookie quarterback, on the roster for the 2013 Pro Bowl, they helped ensure a NFC victory.

Seattle demonstrated great cohesion and teamwork throughout the season, being ranked number one in the NFL in scoring defense. The offense set single season records for total rushing yards, average rushing yards and per carry average during the 2012 regular season.

Coach Pete Carroll has been an inspirational leader rebuilding the Seahawks and strengthening team unity. He has also been instrumental working with youth in our communities through A Better Seattle, a partnership to help create a culture for safety and peace while reducing violence in our communities.

As the Chairman of the Charitable/Exempt Organizations Tax Reform Working Group, I am pleased that, in addition to Coach Carroll, there are so many players from my hometown sports team that have Charitable Foundations. Their passion for giving back to their community exemplifies the spirit of the Pacific Northwest.

Mr. Speaker, I again offer my appreciation for the community spirit of Seattle Seahawks and congratulations for an outstanding and entertaining 2012 season and look forward to their 2013 season. Go Hawks.

CASEY BARRETERO

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Casey Barretero for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Casey Barretero is a 9th grader at Jefferson High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Casey Barretero is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Casey Barretero for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

SEQUESTRATION CUTS HARMING AMERICANS

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, the people of this Nation are looking to this Congress for help. My constituents and the constituents of every elected representative here sent us to Congress to take action on their behalf.

They are worried about how they will keep a roof over their heads, food on their plates, the lights turned on, and get back and forth from work. They are holding out some hope that we might actually do what they sent us here to accomplish. They have told us they want Social Security and Medicare to continue. They want to keep their health benefits and hope to hear that this Nation's resources will be used to restore our infrastructure, create jobs and educational opportunities, strengthen our economy and restore confidence in our leadership as a nation.

They expect elected officials to build, and not to tear down. They want to unify this Nation and not divide it into two camps of the super-rich and the struggling poor. They have told us this in so many ways, especially during the last election. But instead, they are witnessing what seems to be a full-scale assault at every level of government on American life as we know it. From the U.S. Capitol to State capitols even in Georgia, extremists seem determined to reverse our climb toward recovery and drive this Nation into a ditch.

Our first priority should be trying to improve the lives of the middle class, the working class, and low-income Americans, not negotiating lay-offs, freezing salaries, scapegoating government employees, eliminating civil rights protections and collective bargaining. Public servants at every level of government are under constant attack, and in these urgent times we are reducing service to communities and teetering on the edge of economic instability. At the same time that we are reducing

the number of livable-wage jobs, we are gutting re-training and reemployment opportunities. These policies will pull the rug out from under people's lives in the name of some kind of pseudo-fiscal discipline that legislators declare will do this Nation some good.

For yet another week, the Republican-led Congress has turned its back on the number one issue in this country—jobs. Instead of brainstorming a way to fix the massive problems sequestration presents, the House is considering legislation which guts 40 years of bipartisan engagement in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs. This bill would consolidate or eliminate successful initiatives like YouthBuild, the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, Women in Apprenticeship and Non-traditional Occupations, and Community-Based Job Training Grants.

Last week, House Republicans also passed H.R. 890, the partisan welfare bill that would overturn the Obama Administration proposal to allow States the flexibility to move more Americans from welfare to work.

Looking forward to the week ahead, this Congress will move closer to making massive sequestration cuts permanent for millions of Americans. Instead of alleviating suffering, these bills will add to the woes of my constituents and Americans across the country.

We need to come together to find a way to help the people in this country keep their jobs and become gainfully employed, not slashing and cutting when there is no emergency that really warrants these measures. We must not balance the budget on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable Americans, especially when closing common-sense loopholes could easily raise the revenue we need.

Every day, millions of Americans go to bed hungry because they have fallen into poverty. They were evicted from their homes and have lost their jobs. This Congress has turned a blind eye to their suffering and seems to be determined to pile on more. When will we do the work of policy and put aside partisan politics? How can we look our constituents in the eye, knowing these changes will do them harm?

We are here to help solve the problems of America, not create more problems for this country. Legislators can do better; we must do better.

BRIANNA ESQUIBEL

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brianna Esquibel for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brianna Esquibel is an 8th grader at Mandalay Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brianna Esquibel is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brianna Esquibel for winning the Arvada

Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFELONG SKILLS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 15, 2013

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 803) to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, today's legislation is a missed opportunity. As our economy recovers, job training services are more essential than ever, and we should be reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act to ensure that these services are delivered efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, H.R. 803 will not do that.

This bill establishes a single block grant for Workforce Investment Act funds, creating a one-size-fits-all model and jeopardizing services for the most at-risk populations, including workers with disabilities, older workers, disabled veterans, and youth. It also weakens Workforce Investment Boards by eliminating representation requirements for community-based organizations, community colleges, and labor. Without these important stakeholders, Boards will lose vital expertise in training and placement.

While Democrats believe the Workforce Investment Act needs to be updated to meet today's job training needs, H.R. 803 is not the way to do it. I support the substitute offered by Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. MILLER that would streamline programs and improve accountability without threatening services for underserved populations. It would authorize the President's Community College Fund to expand the role of community colleges in job training and allow them to offer specialized skills and recognized credentials. It would increase access for work experience programs, including summer employment, internships, and pre-apprenticeship programs, so workers can receive training on the job. And it would establish common reporting and performance measures across all programs so we can better assess what is working. It is a better approach and I regret that the Republican Majority did not work with us to incorporate these ideas into the final bill.

Unfortunately, H.R. 803 on the floor today is a step backwards, dismantling protections and access for underserved populations and weakening community involvement in job training and placement. I urge my colleagues to vote against this legislation and come together to in a bipartisan way to responsibly reform our workforce development programs.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK T. McHENRY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. McHENRY. Mr. Speaker, on March 14, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 70, 71, and 72.

On March 15, 2013, I was unavoidably absent from the House and missed rollcall votes 73, 74, and 75. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall votes 73 and 74, and I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 75.

BRANDON HELLER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Brandon Heller for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Brandon Heller is an 8th grader at Moore Middle School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Brandon Heller is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Brandon Heller for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SYLVIA MEHAS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 18, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleague, Mr. NUNES, we pay tribute to the life of Sylvia Mehas who passed away on March 9, 2013 at the age of 94. Sylvia will be remembered in the hearts of many as a passionate woman who loved her heritage, family, and faith.

Sylvia grew up in an immigrant family that was from a small village in Greece. Her roots were from the old country; therefore, strong values and morals were instilled in Sylvia early on. Sylvia knew the importance of hard work, and she understood that a little tough love was necessary every once in a while. Her children: Tulla, Peter, and Georgia, appreciate their mother for the lessons she taught them and for the principles that are now ingrained in them.

Sylvia was married to her late husband, George, for over 53 years. Together, they