

their teachers and mentors. The staff of the Garden State Pathways is headed by Ms. Bernadette Gismonde, who is the program coordinator. Her staff includes Ms. Bernadette Stettler, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Danielle Brittin, Job Coach; Ms. Hazel Thompson, Lead Mentor; and Ms. Joyce Howie, Assistant Mentor.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate these young men and women on the hard work they've put in and they have already accomplished. These students have bright futures ahead of them, and I wish them the best in all coming endeavors.

ATTACK ON THE U.S. CONSULATE IN BENGHAZI

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, on March 21, 2013 I joined as a cosponsor of H. Res. 36 to establish a select committee to investigate and report on the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi. That action was taken to insure a thorough review of the loss of four Americans.

Officials including our U.S. Ambassador and the Obama Administration's attempt to keep witnesses and information from Congress. Fortunately, five committees in the U.S. House acted and produced a joint report on April 23, 2013. The House Government Oversight and Reform Committee, which has government-wide investigative powers and authority, has since begun a series of hearings to examine the Benghazi matter.

It is my belief with this thorough review underway, it is no longer necessary to pursue a select committee on this matter.

Therefore, I am withdrawing my cosponsorship of H. Res. 36.

With the extensive work now underway in the House Government Oversight Reform Committee, a select committee would delay, add cost and not benefit the urgent need to properly review the Benghazi matter.

CONGRATULATING JOE IRONSIDE

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friend Joe Ironside on his retirement as Directing Business Agent for District 6 of the Machinists union, which includes Iowa, Illinois and Nebraska. Joe has been an influential and important leader for the Iowa labor community.

Joe began his career in 1972 at the old Iowa Steel and Iron Works factory in Cedar Rapids. Joe was initiated into the Machinists union in March of that year, and wore the badge for 41 years. In 1978, Joe went to Rockwell Goss where he was chief steward, committee person and committee chairperson. He was later elected Business Representative before assuming his current responsibilities. He also served as Vice President of the Iowa Federation of Labor.

Joe's leadership in the labor movement has been felt around the state of Iowa and across

the country. He has been awarded numerous awards over the years including the Gary Ketchum Union Citizen of the Year Award. Anyone who knows Joe will tell you that he is a force to be reckoned with, and that he will be missed.

I'm proud to call Joe my constituent and my friend. I congratulate him on his successful career and more importantly for the work he has done to strengthen the labor movement and expand Iowa's middle class. I wish Joe and his wife Debbie all the best in their future plans.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A FAMILY ACT

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today with my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), to introduce the Every Child Deserves a Family Act in honor of National Foster Care Awareness Month. Our colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) will sponsor the companion legislation in the Senate.

First, I would like to thank my friend, my sister, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN for being my partner in this important fight. I would also like to pay tribute to our former colleague, Congressman Stark, and the hard work of his staff, Jeff Hild, in first championing this important bill. I am fully committed to moving this landmark legislation across the finish line.

Last week, our constituents—including Philip McAdoo and his son Zaden from Atlanta—came to Washington, DC to highlight how essential a loving home can be to a child in need of support and understanding. Philip, his partner Sean Cavanaugh, and Zaden are a beautiful, loving, globe-trotting family; simply being with them just warms your heart. Their story is the happy ending which every foster care youth and potential parent should have the opportunity to experience.

Today, there are more than 400,000 children in our foster care system, with over 104,000 of them waiting for a permanent family. There are ample "qualified" adoptive and foster parents who are overlooked. As result, far too many youth "age out" without any family to support and love them. This bill would fix this problem—saving money and heartache and restoring hope and happiness in the process.

The Every Child Deserves a Family Act is a simple and straightforward proposal. It would prohibit any entity that receives federal child welfare funds from discriminating against prospective adoptive or foster parents on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identification, or marital status. This bill also prevents discrimination against foster care youth on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity.

Mr. Speaker, I fought too long and too hard against discrimination of every kind. This is a problem that is fixable. Our common-sense legislation is supported by nearly 100 child welfare, civil rights, GLBT advocacy, and faith-based organizations because it places the best interest of every child first.

Today, we are joined by over 50 Members of Congress in introducing this bill, and I hope all of my colleagues will join us in support of this good will effort. Simply said, the Every Child Deserves a Family Act is just the right thing to do.

RESOLVING INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL CHILD ABDUCTIONS TO NON-HAGUE CONVENTION COUNTRIES

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, which I chair, held a hearing focused on the persistent and devastating problem of international parental child abduction, which occurs when one parent unlawfully moves a child from his or her country of residence, often for the purpose of denying the other parent access to the child.

The damage to the child and the left behind parent is incalculable and too often life-long. The children especially are at risk of serious emotional and psychological problems and may experience anxiety, eating problems, nightmares, mood swings, sleep disturbances, aggressive behavior, resentment, guilt and fearfulness. These victims are American citizens who need the help of their government when normal legal processes are unavailable or fail.

In 1983, the United States ratified the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction to try to address this serious issue. This Convention creates a civil framework for the quick return of abducted children, and for rights of access to both parents. Absent extenuating circumstances, the child is to be returned within 6 weeks to their country of habitual residence for the courts there to decide on custody or to enforce any previous custody determinations.

The Convention has helped return many children, but it is far from a silver bullet. Even in countries where the Convention is allegedly working, only about 40 percent of children are returned. Other cases are "resolved," but too often with dubious application of the Convention.

Susceptible to abuse by taking parents or unwilling judges, the Convention has too often been stretched to provide cover for abduction rather than recovery of the child. Taking parents have figured out that they can drag out hearing after hearing, appeal after appeal for years until the courts can claim that, "Yes, the child should have been returned but that the child is settled in the new country now and does not have to be returned under an exception in the Convention."

Some Hague Convention signatories are simply not enforcing legitimate return orders. The State Department's 2012 Hague Convention Compliance Report highlights six countries—Argentina, Australia, France, Mexico, Netherlands, and Romania—for failing to enforce return orders. Other countries—Costa Rica, Guatemala, The Bahamas, Brazil, and Panama—are non-compliant with the Convention or showing patterns non-compliance.

In other words, abducted American children are not coming home from these countries and American families need other options.

The same is true for many countries that have not signed the Hague Convention. In 2012 alone, more than 634 children were abducted to countries that have not signed the Hague Convention—countries like Japan, Egypt, and India.

More than 300 children have suffered abduction from the United States to Japan since 1994. Congress does not know of a single case in which the Government of Japan has issued and enforced an order for the return of an abducted child to the United States. According to U.S. State Department statistics, the United States is monitoring 54 ongoing cases involving 74 children who were abducted from the United States to Japan and 21 additional children from the United States who may not have been abducted, but who are being denied access to their American parent.

Although Japan has recently taken steps to join the Hague Convention, Japan's ratification will not address current cases for return. Moreover, experts question whether the ratification includes reservations that will make it impossible for even new abduction cases to be resolved with returns.

The United States does not have a bilateral or other agreement with Japan to facilitate the return of American citizen children who are currently abducted—citizens like Jade and Michael Elias, whose father will testify before us today.

Under the Convention alone, if ratified by Japan, the best that American parents of currently abducted children can hope for is a visit with their child. Such visits are projected to be one hour long, once a month, in a secure facility—hardly dignified or unfettered.

Despite our multi-billion dollar investment in Egypt, neither the Mubarak government nor the Morsi government has seen fit to return abducted American citizen children Noor and Ramsey Bower. They, along with 30 other American children in Egypt, are forced to live without half of their culture, half of their identity, and without the love and guidance of an American parent who daily fights for their return. The United States does not have a bilateral agreement with Egypt to facilitate the return of American citizen children, and has so far been unwilling to make prioritization of these cases a condition for the continued funding of the Egyptian Government.

India also has been a source of immense frustration and grief for American parents. In 2012, 32 more children were abducted to India, bringing the total number to 78 open abduction cases involving 95 children. Although some Indian courts make "Hague-like" decisions to return some children, returns are uneven. Parents attempting to utilize India's courts for the return of abducted children report corruption and incessant delays. The United States does not have a bilateral agreement with India to facilitate the return of American citizen children Convention.

In the last Congress I introduced legislation—the Sean and David Goldman Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act—to impress upon both Hague and non-Hague Convention countries that the United States will not tolerate child abduction or have patience with countries that hide abductors behind the Hague Convention. The bill would empower

the President and Department of State with new tools and authorities to secure the return of abducted American children.

When a country has shown a "pattern of non-cooperation" in resolving child abduction cases, the President will be able to respond decisively with a range of 18 actions and penalties. Based on past experience—particularly with the Goldman case in Brazil—we know that penalties manage to get the attention of other governments, and help them prioritize resolution.

The bill also calls for the State Department to work out memorandums of understanding with countries that have not signed the Hague Convention in order to create agreed-upon routes to abduction resolution between countries, rather than the never-ending and torturous maze American are currently forced to run.

The status quo is simply not adequate, while well meaning and sincere, current policy has failed far too many children and their left behind, broken hearted, parents. To combat the cruelty and exploitation of human trafficking, over a decade ago I authored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. To tangibly assist abducted American children and their left behind parents I introduced "The Sean and David Goldman Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act" this week. The United States can and must do more to protect innocent American children and their left behind parents from the horrors of international child abduction.

IN HONOR OF THE VALLEY FORGE
ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA
SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.
AND THE 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PATRIOTS OF AFRICAN
DESCENT MONUMENT

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Valley Forge Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the 20-year anniversary of the Patriots of African Descent Monument.

One hundred years ago, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority started with 22 women at Howard University. Since then, it has grown to more than 300,000 members in 1,000 chapters worldwide. Today, more than one hundred dedicated alumna from the Valley Forge chapter live in and serve the greater Philadelphia area.

On May 18, 2013, the women of the Valley Forge Alumnae Chapter will pay tribute to the Patriots of African Descent with a wreath laying ceremony commemorating its 20th Anniversary. The Patriots of African Descent Monument, sponsored by the Valley Forge Alumnae chapter in 1993, pays tribute to the service and sacrifice African-American soldiers of the Continental Army provided to our young nation during the Valley Forge Encampment of 1777–1778 and throughout the Revolutionary War.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Valley Forge Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for its continued efforts to honor African-American patriots who have served this country bravely and honorably.

IN RECOGNITION OF DON WOOTEN

HON. CHERI BUSTOS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say a few words about Don Wooten, a man I greatly admire and am honored to call a friend. Tonight, Don is being honored by Augustana College in Rock Island, his alma mater. Due to votes here in Washington, I won't be able to make it, but I want to talk about Don and what he has meant to me, and our community in Illinois.

Don is a former award-winning television reporter and producer. He has also been a teacher, a print columnist and has served on the board of numerous local and state organizations. Don went on to become a public servant, and served two terms in the Illinois State Senate. Afterward, he returned to his roots and founded WVIK radio station at Augustana College in 1980, where he still hosts two weekly radio programs at the ripe age of 85.

Don has been married for more than 50 years to Bernadette and they have 5 children and three grandchildren. As someone who spent years as a journalist herself and has now entered public service, I couldn't ask for a better role model than Don Wooten. He has influenced so many over his life and is a true community leader.

Mr. Speaker, I want to Congratulate Don, and I look forward to hearing his voice on the radio for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE DR.
IRENE H. BRODIE

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 16, 2013

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant from my district, The Honorable Dr. Irene H. Brodie, Mayor of the Village of Robbins. As Mayor Brodie retires after 24 years of service to the Village I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize her many achievements.

Irene Brodie began her career in Robbins as a teacher at Kellar Elementary School where she worked alongside her husband, J. Edmon Brodie, who served as the school's principal. Through her hard work and diligence she later became Assistant Principal at Turner Elementary School. In addition to her professional responsibilities, Brodie continued to be a loving and devoted wife and mother. While doing this, and in spite of her busy schedule, she earned her Doctorate in Education at Northeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Now a recognized educator in the region, Dr. Brodie joined the staff of a small junior college that, at the time, had only a few buildings to accommodate its 12,000 students. After two years of serving as a professor, Dr. Brodie became the first African-American Dean at Moraine Valley Community College. During her tenure, Moraine Valley grew to become the second largest community college in Illinois with a student population that now numbers well over 30,000.