

prepared for any eventuality. He has worked closely with the Committee on House Administration over the years concerning every facet of the House parking regulations. Rod is also involved in continuity and contingency planning efforts for the Sergeant at Arms.

Rod Myers' profound compassion and deep commitment to this institution are second to none. From events such as 9/11 and the anthrax incident, to an earthquake, his gentle nature always projects a sense of assurance and calm to all who encounter him. His leadership by example and an ability to motivate are benchmarks in a long and distinguished career.

Please join me in commending the outstanding service of Mr. Rodric J. Myers, to the Congress of the United States and congratulating him on his retirement. We wish you well in all your future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF MR. LONAL XELA
ROBINSON

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the memory of a gifted young man and community servant, Mr. Lonal Xela Robinson. With exceptional skill and purpose, he dedicated his life to helping those around him and enlightening his community through the arts.

Mr. Robinson was born in Champaign, Illinois on June 24, 1979. His parents instilled within him a love for community service and an evident compassion for all of God's creatures. While in high school, Mr. Robinson achieved the prodigious feats of writing the play "CHANGE" for the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc, as well as serving as vice president in charge of programs for the organization. His play, "CHANGE," won first place in a national convention held in New York City, judged by Broadway stage casts. Mr. Robinson later attended Langston University where he distinguished himself further by founding the Langston University Theatre and Drama Club, as well as traveling the country doing mission work with the Wesley Foundation and United Methodist Church.

After graduating college, Mr. Robinson went on to lead and write for the Houston Sun. Under his leadership, the newspaper expanded its presence and embarked on bold community initiatives in Houston. He led the organization in its adoption of Emancipation Park to present back-to-school rallies and talent shows for children in the community. He started the Houston Sun Presents program, which offered educational, instructive, and entertaining programs and services to the community. Along with his work in the community and leadership of the Houston Sun, Mr. Robinson wrote two yet-to-be published works of poetry, "Pieces of Me" and "Poetry for all Seasons." He also served in various organizations: ombudsman for the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. and the National Council of Negro Women. He also received a number of awards for his contributions to the community, including the 4-H Club Spirit Award, Million Men

March Award, and the Houston Sun Beacon of Light: Men of Valor Award.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robinson will be missed dearly by a multitude of family and friends. This family includes his mother, Dorris Ellis Robinson; brother, Sirrod Robinson; two sisters, Shuronda and Dorcaus Robinson; as well as a loving extended family. Mr. Robinson will be remembered in Houston as a thoughtful and intelligent young man who used the prime years of his life to make his community a better place.

HONORING HEROES FOR VICTIMS
2013 CONGRESSIONAL VICTIMS'
RIGHTS CAUCUS AWARDS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, RAINN, Merced's Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force, Michele Steeb, Martha Herm, LaWanda Hawkins, and Suzanne Beaudoin are six selfless individuals and organizations that have changed the lives of innumerable victims around the country.

Recently, the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus honored these very special advocates and organizations during our annual VRC Awards Ceremony for going above and beyond for victims.

Congressman JIM COSTA and I serve as co-chairs of the Victims' Rights Caucus.

I nominated RAINN, the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, for the Suzanne McDaniel Award for Public Awareness. Just like Suzanne, RAINN has pioneered efforts in the victims' rights community.

RAINN was founded by my friend Scott Berkowitz. It began with the creation of the National Sexual Assault Hotline and has grown to assist and advocate for victims in a variety of innovative ways. Although Scott is from New Jersey, he's a lot like a Texan, and that is why I respect him so much.

Scott and his organization RAINN do not stop until they reach their goal. And their goal is to prevent sexual assault and serve the victims of this awful crime. RAINN never gave up advocating for the SAFER Act (Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act), a bill to end the rape kit backlog. This organization knows firsthand the importance of testing rape kits in order to bring justice to victims and put perpetrators behind bars. Because of RAINN's unceasing efforts, the SAFER Act was signed into law as part of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act earlier this year.

RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline has served more than 1.5 million victims, and the number of victims affected by RAINN's other services and advocacy are countless. Groups like RAINN turn victims into survivors.

Merced's Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Task Force, nominated by VRC co-chair Congressman JIM COSTA for the Lois Haight Award of Excellence and Innovation, is helping to prevent crime before it happens.

This organization is a collaboration of local leaders formed in 2006 in response to gang related violence in the Merced community.

The Task Force makes Merced a safer place by educating the community about vio-

lence, promoting character development, and providing information for families and youth.

From Gang Awareness Workshops to Merced County's first anonymous "text a tip" line, the Task Force has contributed greatly to the Merced community. Organizations like this Task Force are critical to stopping our citizens from becoming victims.

Congressman COSTA's fellow member of the California Delegation, Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI, a particularly active member of the Caucus recognized a leader in her community, Michele Steeb. Ms. Steeb, the CEO of St. John's Shelter Program for Women and Children in Sacramento received the Allied Professional Award for her dedication. Under Ms. Steeb's guidance, St. John's Shelter Program has expanded into more than just a safe place for women and children but a program to help victims thrive. The unique assistance offered like parenting classes, financial management classes, and on-the-job training empower the victims under Ms. Steeb's care to take on the world. Leaders like Michele Steeb transform the lives of crime victims.

Like Michele Steeb, Martha Herm runs a domestic violence program with innovative, community-based components that have led to the betterment of Peoria, IL for years. Ms. Herm is the Executive Director at the Center for the Prevention of Abuse, which she has lead for many years. The Center for the Prevention of Abuse is well known and highly regarded in Congressman AARON SCHOCK's district. To honor Ms. Herm's leadership, Congressman SCHOCK nominated this hero to victims with the Ed Stout Memorial Award for Outstanding Victim Advocacy. This award honors the memory of Ed Stout, the Director of Aid for Victims of Crime of St. Louis, MO—one of the nation's three oldest victim assistance organizations—who died in 2005 following a 30+ year career of inspiring crime victims and those who serve them.

Through Ms. Herm's efforts, the Center has grown from serving mainly women and children to serving all populations and working to stop violence before it starts. In the words of Mike McCoy, the Sheriff of Peoria County, "Martha Herm is a constant voice for those in need."

LaWanda Hawkins is another one who helps those in need. Congresswoman KAREN BASS nominated her for the Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award. Ms. Hawkins is an inspiration to her community and mothers around the country.

I won't forget the story Ms. Hawkins shared with us during the award ceremony. One day she was in her car, listening to a story on the radio about a young man that was murdered. She prayed for the young man and his family the whole car ride, only to find out later that it was her own son, Reggie. He had been tragically murdered.

Ms. Hawkins never wanted another family to feel the pain she felt when she answered the phone that day notifying her that the young man she heard about on the radio was her son. She connected with other parents who experienced similar tragedies. They realized that their cases were not being solved, and they were left out of the criminal justice process. Ms. Hawkins knew that this was not right and in 1996, founded Justice for Murdered Children. Through her organization, she provides a variety of services to families of murdered children, including legal assistance,

family support groups, counseling, and community outreach and education. Not only does she continue to help aid families, but she successfully advocates for legislation to protect victims' rights.

Ms. Hawkins is a force to be reckoned with and a true champion for crime victims.

Suzanne Beaudoin is another bold woman who dedicated her life to serving crime victims. She was nominated for the Ed Stout Memorial Award by one of our newest VRC Members, Congressman MARK POCAN from Wisconsin. Like Ed Stout, Ms. Beaudoin has seen her work directly benefit survivors of crime.

Suzanne Beaudoin currently serves on the Wisconsin Crime Victims Council and has been the Director of the Victim Witness Unit of the Dane County District Attorney's Office for 20 years.

Throughout her years working in the Victim Witness Unit, she established ground-breaking programs in her community and advocated for critical victim legislation, including Wisconsin Victim's Rights Constitutional Amendment and the establishment of a local children's advocacy center. We are thankful for Ms. Beaudoin and those like her who guide victims through the criminal justice system and address the needs of survivors.

The work of these determined individuals never ceases to amaze me.

America is the greatest country in the world because of people like these.

And that's just the way it is.

SAMANTHA BENNETT

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

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

The dedication demonstrated by Samantha Bennett 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 Samantha Bennett 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.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 20, 2013, I was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on rollcall No. 161, "yea;" on rollcall No. 162, "yea;" on rollcall No. 163, "yea."

CONGRATULATING DR. DAVID J. VERDUGO, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Dr. David J. Verdugo on his retirement after forty years as an educator. For the last eight years, Dr. Verdugo has served as the superintendent of the 16,000 student Paramount Unified School District. He will retire in June at the end of the current school year.

Before coming to the Paramount Unified School District, Superintendent Verdugo served at three uniquely different school districts: Spokane Public School District in the state of Washington, El Rancho Unified School District in Pico Rivera, California, and Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, also in California. Dr. Verdugo has been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal, working with children grades K–12. He has also served as an assistant superintendent, where his responsibilities included school facility management, extensive involvement with budget development, implementation of technology programs, employer/employee relations, curriculum and instructional strategies and organizational development.

He is highly respected throughout the school district, the community and the education field. Dr. Verdugo is known for his strategic approach to major decisions, his communication with all stakeholders and his efforts to build a culture where individuals care about each other, resulting in a dramatic difference for students. His communications and work at Paramount Unified during the State's budget crisis resulted in everyone coming together so they could continue their efforts to benefit children, families and employees.

Dr. Verdugo has established a reputation as a leader focused on student learning and achievement. He possesses those critical skills essential to understanding and meeting the needs of students, staff, and parents. He is committed to excellence and believes that all students should be provided the highest quality of education in a safe and secure environment.

With experience serving students of diverse populations and socioeconomic levels in urban and suburban settings, Dr. Verdugo is a staunch supporter of strategic planning and believes strongly that it is essential to the success of any progressive school district.

As Superintendent, Dr. Verdugo has been instrumental in leading many of the school district's significant accomplishments, including dramatically increasing college and career pathways for students, fostering a resurgence of the arts, building new and transforming existing school facilities, and most importantly, raising the level of academic achievement of students to an all-time high.

Dr. Verdugo received his B.A. from Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington; his M.A. from La Verne University; and his Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Southern California. He was recognized as the 2008 ACSA Region 14 Superintendent of the Year. He also received the

California State University of Long Beach Superintendent Leadership Award for 2012 and was selected as a National Governing Board Member for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). He currently serves as President of the highly respected Southern California Superintendents' Association.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking and congratulating Dr. David J. Verdugo for his many years of outstanding service to our community and our young people, and wish him many happy years of retirement.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF BAHAI LEADERS IN IRAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, this month we mark the fifth anniversary of a terrible abuse of human rights in Iran.

Seven Baha'i leaders in Iran have been in prison for five years as of May 14, 2013. They are Mahvash Sabet, Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Behrouz Tavakkoli, and Vahid Tizfahm.

Tragically, there are many prisoners of conscience filling Iran's jails. Our Department of State's annual Human Rights Report documents case after case of violations of religious freedom. Indeed, in Iran, a climate of hostility surrounds all non-Shia religious communities. The Baha'i as well as Sunni Muslims, evangelical Christians, and Jews are victims of discrimination and persecution.

For all the victims of this persecution, and in particular for the seven Baha'i whose grim milestone we mark this month, it is critical that we raise our voices to send a message that they are not forgotten.

These seven leaders are all members of a national-level group—the "Yaran-i-Iran" or "Friends in Iran"—which oversaw the welfare of Iran's Baha'i community. Their 20-year prison term is the longest sentence of any current prisoners of conscience in Iran.

The seven were charged with espionage, propaganda against the Islamic republic, the establishment of an illegal administration, and corruption on earth. These are typical of the false charges and misinformation used to vilify Baha'is in Iran. The defendants rejected these charges completely and categorically. Their crime is being members of the Baha'i Faith, a religion which has been the focus of systematic, government-sponsored persecution in Iran since the 1979 revolution.

The trial of the seven leaders was also the trial of an entire community of more than 300,000. For the last 30 years, more than 200 Baha'is have been killed, hundreds more imprisoned, and thousands deprived of jobs, education, and the freedom to worship.

In an act of communal self-preservation, the Baha'is created an internal university called the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education to educate those denied entry to university. It was raided in 2011 and seven educators and administrators were sentenced to four or five years' imprisonment.