

our borders. I have also opposed amnesty for illegal immigrants who are already here. And I have fought for a biometric exit system to make sure that we know exactly who has entered the United States on a visa, and who has not returned home as they were supposed to.

More than 60 thousand so-called “unaccompanied minors” have arrived at our southern border, mostly from the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This is a 10-fold increase in unaccompanied minors crossing the border since 2011. We have heard a lot of excuses for why they have come here in violation of our immigration laws. We have been told that they are fleeing violence in their home countries, but there has not been any substantial increase in violence there. So it must be something else.

What has changed is that the Obama administration implemented its DACA policy—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—in 2012. This policy tells people that, so long as they make it to this country safely, they won’t be asked to leave. The president has put out the welcome mat for residents of other countries, and told them that our immigration laws will not be enforced.

I went down to the border, near McAllen, Texas, and saw the situation with my own eyes. Some of the individual cases I heard were heartbreaking.

But when I talked to the Border Patrol agents, they told me a different story. Many of the “unaccompanied minors” are in fact arriving with members of their families, or they are seeking to meet up with members of their families who are already here illegally. In addition, over three fourths of them are males, between the ages of 14 and 17. And many of them are affiliated with violent, criminal gangs, or are being recruited for gang membership right there at the border.

And many of them carry communicable diseases.

And, the administration has begun to transport thousands of these illegal immigrants to communities all across the country.

That’s where the problems in our own backyard begin.

Just a couple of months ago, I learned from city officials in Hazleton, my hometown, that they had been contacted by a non-profit group, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, about housing some of the minors at a location right across the street from my district office.

That’s how I found out—because the organization had called the city. The federal government didn’t tell anyone about the plan: not the Governor, not the Department of Public Welfare, not Luzerne County.

When I made the information public, residents of Hazleton rightly expressed their concerns, and the plan was dropped.

But we learned an important lesson in that episode: the federal government is working with organizations across the country to place unaccompanied minors in various communities . . . without telling anyone in the state or locality that they are doing so.

As of July 31st, we know that at least 456 unaccompanied minor illegal immigrants have been released to sponsors in Pennsylvania. The shelters and facilities—according to the best information available right now—are in Mechanicsburg, Womelsdorf, Bethlehem, Montgomery County, and Philadelphia.

There could be others, and there could be plans—right now—being made to house more . . . all without telling state or local governments.

This must stop.

So today I am introducing legislation that will give state and local governments a heads-up when such plans are in the works.

My “Unaccompanied Alien Children Transparency Act” is very straightforward.

It truly will empower states—governors of states—and local governments by providing them with all of the information they need to make an informed decision about relocation plans, and giving them an opportunity to either approve or reject those plans.

First, it will require the Secretary of Health and Human Services, also known as HHS, to provide detailed information regarding the pending relocation of unaccompanied minors. The Secretary will have to inform state and local elected officials of the locations and durations of any housing contracts awarded, and also provide an assessment of the costs associated with and potential impact on education, health, and public safety. The Secretary must also certify to state and local officials that the unaccompanied minors have undergone health screenings, including vaccinations, and that they pose no public health threat. Additionally, the Secretary must certify that the unaccompanied minors and the individuals who will take custody of them have undergone background checks and pose no public safety threat.

Not only should states and localities know about these relocation plans, they ought to know what impact the unaccompanied minors will have on the community. Who exactly are they, and what kind of background screenings have been done? If they will be educated locally in public schools, how much is that going to cost? These are important questions that any community would ask.

The legislation will also require HHS to provide a 30-day notice and comment period for states and localities to review any proposed contract and accompanying certifications of health and public safety background checks. At the conclusion of the 30-day comment period, HHS will have to hold a public hearing within 10 days and provide a representative to address community concerns or questions.

At the end of the initial comment period, the governor of the state in question must decide whether to affirm the contract within seven days. If the governor does not affirm the contract, it is effectively vetoed. If the governor does affirm the contract, then the county commissioners for that jurisdiction will have seven additional days in which to object to the contract. If a majority of the county commissioners do not affirm the contract, then it is again effectively vetoed.

The people in my home city of Hazleton found out about the plans to bring unaccompanied minors into our community, and they made their voices heard. It’s only fair that Americans everywhere have the same opportunity, through their elected officials at the local and state level.

Last week I held a press conference in Hazleton to announce my intention to introduce this legislation, and I was joined by our Chief of Police, Frank DeAndrea, and the Superintendent of Hazleton Area Public Schools, Dr. Frank Antonelli.

Dr. Antonelli told me that this school year, four teenagers—part of the wave of the so-

called “unaccompanied minors”—came forward to enroll in the Hazleton school system. They are all males, ranging in age from 14 to 17. Two of them have had no formal education at all in their entire lives. Dr. Antonelli is still trying to find out the educational background for the other two.

Take one for an example. He is 17-years-old, has no education whatsoever, and speaks not a word of English. How, Mr. Speaker, is a local school division expected to deal with this new student? What grade does he go into?

And since we know that there are as many as 14 distinct dialects of Spanish spoken in some Central American countries, how exactly are the schools expected to communicate with him?

This is a problem that the federal government has dropped on the doorsteps of localities around the country.

This bill is especially important right now, because we have seen the federal government act in secrecy.

The administration has denied “right to know” requests from various organizations, and refuses to disclose exactly where the children are being transported.

This is from a president who promised to be transparent.

Unfortunately, this legislation is necessary to make sure that our states and localities know exactly what the federal government is doing right in their own backyards.

Now, I’m a father and grandfather, and I have seen the conditions of some of the people who have come to the southern border. I have compassion for their situations.

But I also believe that the responsibility for them should rest largely on the countries that they came from.

This should not be America’s problem alone.

And it certainly shouldn’t be the problem of states and localities, which are right now being kept in the dark about the movements of illegal immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, the failure of the federal government to do its job in enforcing immigration laws should not become a growing burden on the folks back home.

#### RECOGNIZING MARY CATHERINE ABBOTT

#### HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2014*

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, with the new school year upon us, we are reminded of the great role education has played in our personal and professional growth. And we can’t help but smile as we remember the educators, the teachers, school administrators and staff who, through the years, so enriched our lives. One individual who devoted her career and most of her adult life to education certainly comes to mind, Ms. Mary Abbott.

Ms. Abbott passed away late last year. And yet, Mr. Speaker, Mary Abbott’s influence lives on. In fact, as has been said, a teacher affects eternity; they never know where their influence ends. Mary Abbott taught sound lessons throughout her productive life; even long after her formal role in education had come to an end, her selfless service continued for her community.

Ms. Abbott devoted a great deal of time educating herself so she could serve others. She graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School and received Bachelor Degrees from St. Mary of the Springs College in Columbus, Ohio, and Concord College in Athens, West Virginia. She received a Masters Degree in Elementary Education from West Virginia University and did advanced studies at the University.

Ms. Abbott taught at Rhodell, Stoco and Hollywood Elementary Schools. She served as curriculum supervisor for Raleigh County Schools for 28 years and served on numerous committees at the county, state and national levels.

Retiring from the Raleigh County School system in 1988, Ms. Abbott became active in the West Virginia and Raleigh County Associations of Retired School Employees, and was a West Virginia State volunteer for AARP serving as the West Virginia Retired Educators Liaison. She was a Prisoner Visitation and Support Volunteer at the Federal Correctional Institution of Beckley, a member of the Woman's Club of Beckley serving as the president in 2008–2010, Delta Kappa Gamma Honorary Society for teachers, and a member of the Raleigh County Democrat Executive Committee.

It's not surprising that Ms. Abbott's love for our great Nation and her passion for learning continue to benefit her community. On September 17th the first Mary Abbott Memorial Scholarship awards will be presented to three worthy Raleigh County high school students who have penned winning essays titled, "What the United States Constitution Means to Me."

Mr. Speaker, it is because of the contributions of dedicated, devoted citizens, like Mary Abbott, that this Nation has been so blessed. And because of the lessons Mary Abbott so selflessly imparted to generations, her work will continue without end.

#### HONORING LEAH LACAYO

#### HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2014*

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Leah Lacayo, an exemplary civil servant, advocate, and community leader in Ventura County.

Leah Lacayo has defined civil service through her leadership roles in her community. Her volunteer work has included serving as a trustee of the Ventura County Fair Foundation, a founding member of Destino: The Hispanic Legacy Fund, a board member to the Jewish Labor Committee, and member of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

She is a staunch advocate for young people and a passionate supporter for women's rights. Leah has also been a steward for the senior community working alongside her husband, Hank, with the Congress of California Seniors.

Additionally, Leah Lacayo has been an active community leader and champion for California State University at Channel Islands (CSUCI) since the university's inception in 2002. More recently, she was elected as the Alumni and Friends Association's Executive Board President in 2009. While serving in this capacity, her goals were to promote a self-

sustaining board and create scholarship opportunities for students. Over the years, Leah has been a steadfast supporter of CSUCI students as a voice that encourages and empowers them to pursue their academic endeavors.

The work Leah has done, and continues to do, has strengthened our community in a remarkable way. Never failing to rise to the occasion when being asked to serve, the Board of Directors to the 31st District Agricultural Association elected Leah Lacayo as President while serving her second appointment to the board. In this capacity, she oversees the legal body governing the fair and fairgrounds in Ventura County. Leah has upheld the fair as a regional enterprise and continuing source of income for the area.

Leah is a good friend to many and I certainly cherish our friendship. She has been a steadfast supporter and has always been willing to offer honest counsel to me over the years both in the California Legislature and in the US Congress on policy issues affecting Ventura County.

For these reasons, it is my sincere pleasure to join the Jewish Labor Committee in recognizing Leah Lacayo with the Elinor Glenn Leadership Award for her extraordinary life of leadership, engagement, and dedication to her community.

#### HONORING CAPT. JOSE ACOSTA ON THE OCCASION OF THE CHANGE OF COMMAND AT THE CAPTAIN JAMES A. LOVELL FEDERAL HEALTH CARE CENTER

#### HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2014*

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to honor Captain Jose Acosta, who will be relinquishing Command at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) in the suburban Chicago district that I represent.

In 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) opened Lovell FHCC, our nation's first integrated VA–DOD federal health care center. Lovell FHCC was the culmination of years of vision, planning and hard work. It was and is an example of excellence for all other VA and DoD health care facilities.

Capt. Acosta joined Lovell FHCC in 2012 as the Commanding Officer and Deputy Director, and he was subsequently named Acting Director. In this capacity, Capt. Acosta managed the day-to-day operations of the federal health center, which provides medical care for the veterans and military families in the area. Additionally, Lovell FHCC is responsible for maintaining the military readiness of the more than 40,000 new sailors receiving basic training each year at Naval Station Great Lakes, as well as the 4,000 active duty personnel on base.

Under Capt. Acosta's leadership, Lovell FHCC made the vision of an integrated health system a reality, raising the bar of achievement. Currently in its fourth year, Lovell FHCC provides world-class medical service to the veterans, active duty personnel, military family and recruits in North Chicago and the surrounding communities, holding more than 800,000 patient visits in 2013 alone.

Throughout his distinguished career, Capt. Acosta has displayed extraordinary commitment to his country and dedication to his fellow soldiers. He fully embraced and brought to life Lovell FHCC's mission of "Readying Warriors and Caring for Heroes."

I want to personally thank Capt. Acosta for everything that he has done at Lovell FHCC, and wish him the best of luck as he continues his service as the Commanding Officer for Naval Medical Center San Diego.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF EDNA FARRELL, 2014 MS. ALABAMA NURSING HOME

#### HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2014*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Mrs. Edna Farrell, a resident of Arbor Springs Health and Rehabilitation Center in Opelika. Mrs. Farrell was recently named the 2014 Ms. Alabama Nursing Home.

Edna Farrell is a native of Brooklyn, New York. She is also a Cornell graduate and a retired nurse and was a member of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. When she graduated from the corps, she had three Maltese crosses on her shoulders, a sign of high ranking. Her husband who fought in World War II and Vietnam, took the family from Brooklyn to Fort Benning, Korea and Honolulu.

Mrs. Farrell was named Ms. Arbor Springs Health and Rehab Center in the nursing home's pageant last year. Farrell was named the 2014 Ms. Alabama Nursing Home this July during the pageant, which was held in Birmingham.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mrs. Edna Farrell on her achievement and wishing her great success during her reign as 2014's Ms. Alabama Nursing Home.

#### RECOGNIZING SARA LOUISE STEVENS BOOTH AND CHRISTOPHER "KIT" HENRY BOOTH FOR THEIR EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### HON. WILLIAM L. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2014*

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sara Louise Stevens Booth and Christopher "Kit" Henry Booth for their extraordinary community service.

The Commemoration of the Battle of Plattsburgh began in 1997 as a weekend event and this year will take place during sixteen days. It is an event that captures the interest of history buffs, authors of history books, children and adults of all ages.

Kit and Sally Booth, people that I have known for well over thirty years, have been the prime movers for the development of this exciting historical event in our community. It now provides concerts, the Children's Old Time Village Fair, offers dances and authentic food from the period, all of which appeal to not only those interested in the historical importance of the Battle of Plattsburgh but those just interested in having a fun weekend.