

provide accessible community based health services.

Perhaps what is most special about BLDC is that it is a family affair. The Brooks family have been and continue to be dedicated community activists. Bishop Theodore Brooks and his late brother, Walter, seeing a real need, opened the doors of BLDC as a way to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors. Today, BLDC is still led by President and CEO Bishop Theodore Brooks and his son, Darrell, works tirelessly by his side. They understand that a home is not simply a place to rest your head—it is a source of comfort and security for families. By making these investments, they are not only leading by example, they are empowering residents and inspiring a renewed pride in and commitment to their community.

For their many invaluable contributions to the Dixwell neighborhood and the New Haven community, I am honored to rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Bishop Brooks, his son Darrell, the Brooks family and the staff and supporters of the Beulah Land Development Corporation as they celebrate the organization's platinum anniversary. I have no doubt that even as they celebrate this special occasion, their vision and leadership will continue to make a difference in our community and in the lives of others for many more years to come.

CONGRATULATING MERLE
SIDENER ACADEMY FOR HIGH
ABILITY STUDENTS, A BLUE RIB-
BON SCHOOL

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an outstanding school in my district that is being honored as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School. It is a pleasure to congratulate the Merle Sidener Academy for High Ability Students in Indianapolis, Indiana in celebration of this special occasion.

The National Blue Ribbon designation, given by the U.S. Department of Education, is awarded to both public and private schools across our great nation. Started by President Reagan and given annually since 1982, the award celebrates great American schools that achieve very high learning standards or are making significant improvements in the academic achievements of their students. In my district and across the country, the award recognizes the great educators, students and parents who have worked so hard to ensure Indiana's children reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

For all of these reasons and many more, I am so proud that the Sidener Academy is receiving this prestigious designation. It is a wonderful acknowledgement of the school's commitment to providing young Hoosiers an exceptional education. While 420 schools nationwide received nominations, only 287 were chosen as National Blue Ribbon Schools, making this recognition all the more impressive.

Since opening its doors in 2008 as a magnet school for Indianapolis' gifted and talented students, the Sidener Academy has grown to

nearly 400 students and offers a 2nd–8th grade curriculum. The school was named in honor of Merle Sidener, a prominent figure in the Indianapolis community. After making a successful career in journalism, Sidener eventually served as the President of the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners.

As a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, I also want to acknowledge how important it is to our nation's future to encourage and raise a new generation of Americans who have the skills and knowledge to succeed both in and out of the classroom. Students like those at the Sidener Academy give me hope that we will accomplish this vital mission. Their outstanding work is an inspiration to students, educators and parents across the nation. Once again, congratulations to the Sidener Academy. I am very proud of you.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF JUSTICE MARVIN BAXTER

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Mr. NUNES and Mr. VALADAO to recognize Justice Marvin Baxter for his honorable service to the state of California. For decades, Justice Baxter served as a dedicated leader who willingly and unselfishly gave his time and talent to make our state a better place.

Marvin Baxter was born in Fowler, California on January 9, 1940. He grew up on his family farm as a second generation American. All four of his grandparents emigrated from Armenia in the early twentieth century. After graduating from Fresno State, he went on to the University of California's Hastings School of Law, where he earned his law degree in 1966.

Justice Baxter began his lifelong career in law in 1967 as a Deputy District Attorney for Fresno County. Two years later, he continued on at a private practice focusing on civil law. Justice Baxter worked with the firm Andrews, Andrews, Thaxter, Jones & Baxter for 14 years before he moved back to public service acting as Appointments Secretary to Governor George Deukmejian. In that capacity, Mr. Baxter advised the Governor on judicial and executive appointments.

After working in the Governor's office for five years, Mr. Baxter was appointed by Governor Deukmejian as Associate Justice of the California Court of Appeal for the Fifth District. In 1991, he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of California. Subsequently, in 2002, Justice Baxter was elected by the California voters to serve an additional 12 years as associate justice.

Throughout his career, Justice Baxter has been a part of many landmark decisions. He is known amongst his peers for being straightforward and clear headed in the courtroom. Colleagues will miss the most senior Supreme Court justice for sound feedback they could regularly count on.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that Mr. NUNES, Mr. VALADAO, and I ask our colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize Justice Marvin Baxter for his service to the state of California. Although his time on the California Supreme Court has come to an

end, Justice Baxter has made a lasting impression and we commend him for his hard work and dedication.

HONORING AIXA TORRES

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Aixa Torres, a tireless advocate for New York's working families. Born in Santurce, Aixa moved with her parents and sisters to New York City in 1955. Attending public school, she graduated from Central Commercial High School as a certified Bookkeeper. She has lived for over 50 years in the Lower East Side (LES) with her siblings Silvia, Aurea and Arthur.

In 1971, Aixa married the late George Carmona, Jr. and had two children, George III and Liza Noemi. She still lives in the LES with her daughter and grandchildren Mia Noemi and Elijah Michael Daniel.

Aixa has committed her life to caring for her community. For more than three decades she assumed leadership roles on numerous committees and boards for various organizations in the city including parent associations and Action for Progress Adult Day Care center. For twenty-two years she has advocated for District 1 families.

Aixa was elected President of Alfred E. Smith Resident Association in 2010, representing over 4,300 tenants in twelve buildings. Now serving her second term as president, Aixa has stood out as a courageous, committed and caring fighter for Smith residents. She has worked to end neglect and abuse by city agencies, helped stop attempts to develop luxury apartments on open spaces, while caring for residents in the crisis of Hurricane Sandy.

During her tenure as president she and the association have received citations from the New York City Council and recognition from the New York State Assembly and Senate for her work on behalf of Smith residents. Aixa was honored by the New York City Council Women's Caucus at the Inaugural #WOMENLEAD Celebration.

Mr. Speaker, this month, Aixa will be retiring from her post as a District 1 Family Advocate. While she is leaving her position with the New York City Department of Education, anyone who knows Aixa recognizes she will certainly remain an active and welcome voice in our community. Today, I would ask all my colleagues to join me in saluting someone who has been a champion for New York residents and a stalwart defender of our city's families—Aixa Torres.

IN MEMORY OF RICK RICHARDSON

HON. PAUL C. BROWN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, a great Georgian, patriot, and personal friend—Rick Richardson, who passed away on November 14th from a sudden stroke.

Rick served the Georgia GOP for 25 years as the president and a national board member of the State Young Republicans, and 4th District chairman.

He had a tremendous impact on his fellow staff, the chairmen of the State Party, and all 159 counties in Georgia through his humble and hard-working attitude.

Rick was not only the party's "go-to guy" for history on any level but a great friend to all who knew him.

Rick's father and mother should take great pride in raising a son who touched many lives and will continue to do so in the days ahead.

In return, Rick, who lost his father at a young age, stayed by his surviving mother of 92, whom he cared for and loved.

Today, may we reflect on Rick's singular character and the tremendous work he did for Georgia, his family, and country.

Let us not forget him—a proud son, faithful servant, and example of what it means to be a selfless leader.

IRANIAN GOVERNMENT IS INHUMAN, BARBARIC, AND A TERROR ON THE IRANIAN PEOPLE

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in Iran there is no freedom of speech or press. Criticize the government of Iran and you can be arrested, tortured, and even killed. The MEK, an opposition group that only wants freedom for the Iranian people, has seen that firsthand. Hundreds of its members have been executed for doing nothing more than protesting the government.

It isn't just political dissidents who are persecuted in Iran. There is no freedom of religion in Iran. If you are not a Shiite Muslim, you never know when you might be dragged off to jail.

Just like religious minorities, women too are treated like second-class citizens and denied basic human rights. Domestic violence, that evil tactic of cowardly men, is not illegal in Iran. In October, a string of acid attacks injured women deemed "badly veiled." Again, the people rose up. But these protestors were also met with tear gas, violent beatings, and arrests.

But there's a remarkable thing, Mr. Speaker, about repression: it cannot suppress the innate desire in all of us to be free.

In 2009, we saw the people of Iran fight against tyranny. Thousands of Iranians marched defiantly in the streets, protesting the fraudulent election of Ahmadinejad.

In response, police on motorbikes ran over protestors, fired tear gas, beat them with batons, tortured them, shot them. Over a hundred protestors were murdered in the 2 weeks that followed the election.

Today, President Rouhani would like us to believe that life in Iran has changed. The truth is that life in Iran has not changed. President Rouhani's words are empty lies.

The Iranians are freedom-loving people, and they deserve the basic human rights. Today, with this bill we tell the people of Iran that they do not fight alone. That we stand together with them against the Supreme Leader and all his

cronies. And one day, hopefully soon, we will stand with them in Tehran to celebrate the downfall of the Iranian regime.

And that's just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING HONORARY CONSUL BERJ K. APKARIAN

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues Mr. NUNES and Mr. VALADAO to recognize Mr. Berj K. Apkarian upon his appointment as the first Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Fresno. This is a monumental occasion for not only Berj but for Fresno's entire Armenian community.

In 1979, Berj immigrated to Fresno, California, from Syria, and he has since been a very active member of Fresno's Armenian-American community. He is the Executive Director of Physician Relations at Community Medical Centers and is also a professor at California State University, Fresno, where he leads the Armenian Studies Program and the Center for Armenian Studies.

In 2009, the City of Fresno established a sister city partnership with the city of Etchmiadzin in Armenia. The partnership enhances the bond between Fresno and Armenia, and Berj was instrumental in forming the relationship. To further strengthen our city's ties with Armenia, the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Armenia was established on August 14, 2014.

As Honorary Consul, Berj will continue to play an integral role in strengthening our Valley's relationship with Armenia. In addition to forming a stronger relationship with Armenia, Berj plans to take a team of medical professionals to Armenia to educate and provide healthcare services for residents living in rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that Mr. NUNES, Mr. VALADAO, and I ask our colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to recognize Mr. Berj K. Apkarian as he begins to serve as the first Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia in Fresno.

CELEBRATING PULMONARY HYPERTENSION AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join those celebrating the month of November as Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness Month and to thank the Pulmonary Hypertension Association for its work in furthering understanding of this life-changing disease.

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a chronic, complex, and life-threatening lung disease marked by elevated blood pressure in the lungs. The Pulmonary Hypertension Association (PHA) is a nonprofit organization that seeks ways to prevent and cure pulmonary hypertension and to provide hope for the PH community through support, education, advoca-

cacy and awareness. I am particularly proud of the work that the PHA Midwest Chapter is doing to provide support for people living with pulmonary hypertension and those who care for them. Their efforts to raise awareness and push for research into improved treatments and, ultimately, a cure are critical.

PHA is a young organization that is changing the history of this illness. From simple beginnings—four women around a kitchen table in Florida in 1990—PHA has evolved in size and complexity. When the association was founded, there were no support groups to help individuals and caregivers cope with this disease. Today, PHA serves more than 13,000 members and supporters with over 245 support groups that provide knowledge, support, hope and empowerment for the PH community. PHA continues to work every day to find a cure for pulmonary hypertension and believes that no one should face this disease alone.

On November 22, PHA Midwest and the PH community will mark Pulmonary Hypertension Month by hosting the inaugural O2 breathe Hearts PHor Hope Gala. The gala is an opportunity both to focus attention and to recognize the accomplishments and advances made in the PH field, while honoring those who made these advances possible. This special evening will honor Stuart Rich, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago Medicine with the 2014 Heart PHor Hope Legacy Award. A dedicated researcher, passionate physician and continuous supporter of PHA, Dr. Rich has been a groundbreaking leader in the pulmonary hypertension field for more than three decades and continues to show his dedication and support of the PH community.

The PHA Midwest Chapter is a valuable resource, and I am grateful for the job that it is doing to raise awareness through next week's gala and the annual marathon, to provide assistance, and to push for greater research and medical breakthroughs.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MICHELE MARLENE VENABLE

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Michele Marlene Venable and extend my condolences to her family.

Michele, a resident of Florida's 23rd Congressional District and a long-time constituent of mine from the city of Hollywood, tragically passed away on November 8th after a battle with stomach cancer.

All of us that knew Michele could tell you that she represented the very best in our community.

She was dedicated to selflessly helping others, putting her community first, and empowering the most vulnerable.

She was a beacon of light for so many.

She will be tremendously missed, but never forgotten by our South Florida community.

I will remember Michele most for her work as Director of Social Services at the Jubilee Center of Broward County.

In this position, Ms. Venable coordinated delivering food, clothing, and vital personal