

provide its members and their families with a fun and therapeutic experience that will inspire them in their recovery, as well as raise awareness for the disabilities and challenges faced by its members. Engaging its members in a traditional "a cappella" format, Therapy Choirs of Michigan has developed choirs tailored to youth, seniors, individuals with developmental disabilities and veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. For each of its choirs, Therapy Choirs of Michigan provides a supportive environment of structured rehearsals that allows its members to maximize the development of improved self-esteem and building of enhanced social skills.

Over the last fifteen years, the members of Therapy Choirs of Michigan have performed at over 160 concerts across the state while sharing their creativity, resilience, and artistry with others. They have been featured by local television stations and newspapers in the Greater Detroit area for the impact they are making, which includes donation drives that provided the Historic Detroit Rescue Mission with clothing that helped nearly 3,000 Michigan residents in-need. The efforts of its members have earned the Therapy Choirs of Michigan recognition from numerous organizations, including the Farmington Community Arts Council for outstanding achievement in the performing arts. And most recently, the work and impact of the Therapy Choirs of Michigan was recognized by the Michigan House of Representatives, which proclaimed the first week of March to be Therapy Choir Awareness Week across the entire state.

Mr. Speaker, Therapy Choirs of Michigan and its members have demonstrated the incredible resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity and remarkable courage to share their stories and raise awareness of their experiences with residents across the state. It is my honor to recognize and congratulate Len McCulloch and members of the Therapy Choirs of Michigan for the remarkable impact they are making on communities across the state and I wish them continued success and growth as they prepare for their annual "Capitol Concert" in Lansing.

NATIONAL MARFAN AWARENESS MONTH

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize February as National Marfan Awareness Month on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Americans affected by Marfan syndrome and related heritable connective tissue disorders across the country.

It is important to raise awareness of Marfan syndrome and related heritable disorders, which are rare genetic conditions. The signs of these conditions include long arms and legs, curved spine, a concave or convex chest, flexible joints, and flat feet. Some patients may display the features of these conditions from birth while others may develop them later in life.

Knowing the signs and features are important and can save lives. The heart is often affected too, which can lead to aortic enlargement and dissection, and sudden death. An

early and accurate diagnosis, regular monitoring, and, in some cases, therapies or medical interventions are necessary to prevent cardiac events.

I am proud to represent the Port Washington, NY-based Marfan Foundation, which leads the effort to improve the lives of individuals affected by heritable connective tissue disorders. This year marks Carolyn Levering's 20th anniversary as President and CEO of the Foundation. Under her leadership, the Foundation has grown into an effective and compassionate organization. As a result of her dedication and the hard work of the Foundation, medical research has been advanced, treatments and diagnostic tools have been discovered, patient care has improved and, most importantly, lives have been saved.

I understand Carolyn recently announced plans to step down from her executive role at the Marfan Foundation next year. When the Foundation's Founder, Priscilla Ciccariello, first tapped Carolyn to lead the organization into the next century, there is no way she could've known just how far the heritable connective tissue disorder community could come in just two decades.

During this Marfan Awareness Month, I call on my colleagues to reflect on the progress that Carolyn, Priscilla, and the Marfan Foundation have made, and to ask themselves what they can do on behalf of their Marfan-affected constituents to ensure that the next twenty years are just as encouraging as the previous two decades.

26TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HORRIFIC ATTACK AGAINST ARMENIANS

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, the 27th of February marks the 26th anniversary of the horrific attack against Armenians in the town of Sumgait in Soviet Azerbaijan. Dozens of Armenians were killed and hundreds more were wounded. During the pogrom, Armenian women and children were raped, people were set on fire and beaten to death, while police stood by unwilling or unable to intervene.

The violence touched off a broader attack against Azerbaijan's ethnic Armenians, ultimately resulting in a war with Nagorno-Karabakh in which tens of thousands of people were killed. The conflict remains unresolved today and the military blockade of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic continues. The pogroms precipitated a massive refugee situation displacing hundreds of thousands of people, virtually eliminating Azerbaijan's once-significant Armenian population.

Mr. Speaker, as people of conscience, this is a remembrance we must all engage in. For me, it is also a very personal remembrance. My own family fled the slaughter of the Armenian Genocide under the Ottomans, and when we learned of the massacres against Armenians in 1988, we saw history repeating itself. These vicious acts of murder, targeted at ethnic groups, must be forcefully condemned whenever and wherever we see them.

Without our recognition and our forceful condemnation, the cycle of violence will con-

tinue. Even today, Christians and other minority groups are being driven from Syria by extremists, and the once large and diverse ethnic mosaic there is all but eradicated. Without our attention and action by the world community, there will be no end in sight.

Today, Mr. Speaker, let us remember the Armenians who lost their lives in Azerbaijan 26 years ago. And then let us take up the work that our principles demand of us, standing united against ethnic violence, discrimination, extremism and brutality, wherever we find it.

IN RECOGNITION OF JUDGE AMY HATHAWAY'S SERVICE TO THE RESIDENTS OF DETROIT AND WAYNE COUNTY

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Honorable Amy P. Hathaway, a judge on the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan in Wayne County, who is retiring from the bench after nearly two decades of service.

Judge Hathaway's service to the people of Southeast Michigan began more than twenty years ago, when she joined the Wayne County Corporation Counsel as Assistant Corporation Counsel. In this role, Judge Hathaway undertook plaintiff and defense litigation matters in county, state and federal courts, as well oversaw the drafting of county ordinances and review of tax matters. After two years of work for Wayne County, Judge Hathaway was elected the Third Circuit Court of Michigan, with jurisdiction over matters of equity, civil claims in excess of \$25,000 and matters involving felony violation of Michigan's criminal statutes. Prior to her public service, Judge Hathaway worked as a paralegal for Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP and as an associate at Dykema Gossett PLLC following her graduation from University of Detroit Mercy School of Law in May 1987.

While serving on the bench, Judge Hathaway has been recognized by numerous community organizations for her accessibility and conduct. In 2012, the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association gave her an outstanding rating and cited her as among the most accessible and friendly judges on the Third Circuit Court. Additionally, Dbusiness Magazine named Judge Hathaway one of its Top Circuit Court Judges in 2013. Throughout her career, Judge Hathaway is an active member of the State Bar of Michigan and has served on its Constitutional Law Committee. She has also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Children and was elected by her peers to the Board of Directors of the Barristers of Detroit Bar Association, where she was named its Barrister of Year in 1991. Judge Hathaway has also taken on responsibilities as a mentor to the interns that have worked in her office.

In addition to her commitment to serving the residents of Wayne County, Judge Hathaway has remained a proud and dedicated mother to her three adult children and a strong partner for her husband, the Honorable David Groner, who also serves as a judge on the Third Circuit Court of Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, as Judge Hathaway prepares to embark upon a new chapter on her life, I congratulate her and thank her for her many years of service to the people of Wayne County. Over her more than two decades of public service, Judge Hathaway has developed expertise and experience that will cause her to be greatly missed in the court room.

WELCOMING THE CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS' SISTER CITY, SHIBEI DISTRICT OF QINGDAO OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the City of Thousand Oaks, California, who will be welcoming its sister city, Shibe District of Qingdao of the People's Republic of China, for their first visit to the Conejo Valley on February 27, 2014.

Formally approved on July 9, 2013, the Thousand Oaks City Council unanimously accepted the concept of Thousand Oaks, California and Shibe District, Qingdao as sister cities. The relationship between the two cities has a mission to create an environment for promoting and developing effective and mutually beneficial cooperation between the citizens of both municipalities. It is a harmonious relationship in which both parties conduct reciprocal cultural, educational, business, professional and technical exchanges. The friendly cooperation between both cities is based on the principles of mutual respect of the partners and the sovereignty of each state.

With a large Asian-American population presence in the Conejo Valley, community leaders, in collaboration with the Center for Asian Performing Arts, conceptualized the idea of a sister city relationship with China to promote Asian culture and support the cultural exchange between East and West.

There are many shared interests and commonalities among the two cities which makes it an ideal partnership. While Thousand Oaks was named among the top ten safest large cities in the United States, Shibe District, Qingdao was named among the top ten livable cities with the most beautiful bay in China. Additionally, both cities have developed in the areas of technology.

Among the delegation members that will visit the Conejo Valley are the mayor of the Shibe District, the directors of the Bureau of Tourism and of the Bureau of Economic Development, and the deputy chief of staff for the Department of Commerce. On this momentous occasion, the mayors of both cities will sign documents declaring their formal relationship.

I want to congratulate Thousand Oaks and Shibe District on this momentous occasion and look forward to the future accomplishments and successes that this relationship will foster.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, in 2005 I supported a similar version of this bill that was truly bipartisan and aimed at reversing a Supreme Court decision, *Kelo v. City of New London*. In that decision, the Court upheld the right of New London to take private property and transfer it to another private individual for the purpose of increasing the tax revenue of the city. The House passed that bill (H.R. 4128) by a vote of 376–38, but the Senate never took up H.R. 4128.

Unfortunately, the version before us today goes much farther than the more narrowly tailored 2005 bill. H.R. 1944 would bar any form of eminent domain related to generating economic activity. Such a sweeping approach is contrary to the Constitution and to our history.

The rights of property owners were so important to our nation's founders that they enshrined property rights in our Constitution. However, the Founders knew that towns and municipalities would need to look after the greater public good and occasionally acquire property with just compensation to the owners in order to use that property for public good. The power of eminent domain has enabled us to make many advances over the years. It was used to create the national railroad system, the interstate highway system, and make telephone, electric, sewer, and water lines available to all our communities. Eminent domain, when used properly, is a critical power of government that has benefited people in New Jersey and across America. This bill would eviscerate this power, and for that reason I cannot support this bill in its current form.

TAXPAYERS RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the "Taxpayer Right-to-Know-Act."

The Taxpayer Right-to-Know Act would require all federal agencies to describe, in detail, all programs under their agency, their costs, the number of employees running each program, and possible duplication. Reports would be due each year.

Agencies would also have to publish performance reviews and improper payment rates. OMB would then analyze the reports for overlapping programs and provide concrete recommendations on how to reduce duplication and waste.

This bill would ensure greater transparency, enhance scrutiny of taxpayer dollars, and help deliver better value to the American people.

The Taxpayer Right-to-Know Act is about transparency, fiscal responsibility, and finding solution to right-size the government for the American people.

REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE MARCUS EUGENE COLLINS, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a great man, veteran, and outstanding public servant, the Honorable Marcus Eugene Collins, Sr. Sadly, Marcus passed away on Friday, February 14, 2014, at the age of 87. The funeral service was held on Monday, February 17, 2014, at 3 p.m., in the chapel of Jamerson-Braswell Funeral Home in Pelham, Georgia.

Born on January 25, 1927, in Albany, Georgia, Marcus spent most of his life in Pelham, Georgia. As a veteran of World War II, Marcus honorably and courageously served his country.

Marcus was also dedicated to serving his local community in Georgia. He represented Pelham in the Georgia House of Representatives for twenty years and served as Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. After his time in the House of Representatives, Marcus was appointed Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue. He served in this capacity from 1983 until his retirement in 1996. Later, Marcus was appointed Executive Director of the Tobacco Community Development Board.

Hailed by his friends and family as a true Southern gentleman, Marcus was a "mover and shaker" in the community. He was ahead of his time, a true innovator, and a crucial player in South Georgia leadership. He was an inspiring mentor to me and to many others and the great legacy he leaves to all of us is the faithful and dedicated life he led.

Maya Angelou once said, "A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies." Marcus is undoubtedly great because of his distinguished service to his community, devotion to his work, and the compassion he showed for his friends and loved ones.

Marcus is survived by his wife, Elizabeth; children, Elizabeth, Marcus, David, Jennifer, and Rebecca; and thirteen grandchildren. He was a devoted member of Lake Pleasant Baptist Church in Pelham, Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the Collins family and we pray that they be encouraged by their abiding faith and the Holy Spirit during the coming days, weeks, and months ahead. I also ask my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to the Honorable Marcus Eugene Collins, Sr., and his legacy of service to the city of Pelham and State of Georgia. He loved the people of Mitchell County and he was committed to making the community prosperous and to improving the quality of life. He will truly be missed.

IN RECOGNITION OF RONALD DAVIS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ronald Davis who has been East Palo Alto's