

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

COMMEMORATING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA

**HON. DANIEL WEBSTER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the establishment of Belle Isle, Florida.

Founded in 1924 to preserve Lake Conway and the surrounding chain of lakes, the name "Belle Isle" was selected to resemble the French phrase "beautiful island." The local natural resources, including parks and extensive waterways, facilitate Belle Isle residents' active outdoor culture. Additionally, Belle Isle is home to nearly 100 businesses that include iconic local restaurants and stores. Small communities like Belle Isle are the cornerstones of American culture and economy.

It is a privilege to serve the residents of Belle Isle, and I thank them for their tremendous contributions to the Central Florida community.

WILL THERE BE AN AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY?

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the African Union, or AU, is in the midst of a long program to create an African Economic Community through the eventual merging of existing regional economic communities. U.S. policy is to support regional integration in Africa as enhancing the success of U.S.-Africa trade by reducing trade barriers and creating larger markets. I chaired a hearing yesterday that examined the AU effort and its potential benefits for Africa and the United States.

A focal point in U.S.-Africa trade policy is the encouragement of integrated markets in Africa. It makes trade with Africa more efficient and beneficial for African businesspeople and governments. It also is more attractive for foreign investors.

The AU, a regional grouping of all countries in Africa except Morocco, was established in 2002 as the successor to the now-defunct Organization of African Unity, or OAU. Its formation was largely motivated by OAU members' desire to more quickly achieve the goals of the 1991 African Economic Community Treaty. The treaty is intended to promote African regional economic integration and socio-economic development through the planned creation of a common African market and shared political and economic institutions. Make no mistake, this is a challenging goal. The example of the European Community demonstrates the difficulty even when involving developed nations.

The current African nations were not created to collaborate with one another. Varying languages, conflicting legal and commercial systems and often incompatible transportation infrastructures make this worthy goal a major challenge, and there are other obstacles that make this effort even more daunting.

Nevertheless, the eight recognized Regional Economic Communities have a timetable to which they are generally adhering with few exceptions. The Arab Maghreb Union, a trade agreement comprising Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia, is inactive and frozen due to deep political and economical disagreements between Morocco and Algeria regarding, among other issues, the matter of Western Sahara independence. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States, comprising 28 countries across Africa's Sahel region, is finding regional integration difficult because of its members being part of other trade blocs that are more advanced in their integration.

Meanwhile, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, a free trade area with nineteen member states stretching from Libya to Swaziland, has agreed to an expanded free-trade zone and is also considering a common visa scheme to boost tourism.

The East African Community, an intergovernmental organization comprising five East African countries—Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda—signed a protocol just last year outlining their plans for launching a monetary union within 10 years.

The Economic Community of Central African States, which includes 10 countries across the middle of the continent, formed a customs union with a free trade area between members and a common external tariff for imports from other countries as long ago as 1966.

The Economic Community of West African States, a regional group of 15 West African countries, is creating a single large trading bloc through an economic and trading union and serves as a peacekeeping force in the region—all despite operating officially in three co-equal languages—French, English, and Portuguese.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development is an eight-country trading bloc based in East Africa and has transformed from an executive group with a focus on development and environmental control to a larger structure as a Regional Economic Community.

The Southern African Development Community began as an anti-apartheid coalition fighting for majority rule in South Africa in the 1970s, but since majority rule came to South Africa in 1994, it has become a traditional Regional Economic Community, and like its West African counterpart, sometimes engages in peacekeeping operations.

By 2017, a free trade union and customs union is supposed to be established in each Regional Economic Community. The process is still stalled in North Africa and the Sahel, although there is progress elsewhere. This phase is now fully in force in East Africa, as well as West and Central Africa.

In today's hearing, we are looking for recommendations on what the Regional Eco-

nomic Communities and their member countries must do to fulfill the AU's ambitious agenda, but we also want to examine what the U.S. government, other donor governments and international financial institutions can do to enhance their efforts in this regard. Ostensibly, this assistance has been ongoing for some time now but we want to find out more about why these efforts have not moved farther ahead.

At yesterday's hearing, we had with us experts who have observed regional integration in Africa, and in some cases, have worked to promote it for more than a decade. We know what governments have said about the benefits of regional integration, and we have heard from the private sector about their preference for integrated markets. Yesterday we heard from those who can provide and have provided the technical assistance necessary to make these goals a reality.

We in Congress currently are working on legislation to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and integrated regional markets will only enhance the success of this trade process moving forward. We hope today's contributions will better inform us on how we can more effectively encourage regional integration and the expansion of African markets.

FOR THE RELIEF OF JEANETTE VIZGUERRA-RAMIREZ

**HON. JARED POLIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the case of Jeanette Vizguerra Ramirez. I have introduced a bill on her behalf in an effort to prevent the senseless destruction of her family in light of her tremendous contributions to her community and the immigrant rights movement in Colorado.

Jeanette Vizguerra Ramirez has been in the United States since 1997. She has three young U.S. citizen children, and two citizen grandchildren. She is a devoted mother and grandmother who routinely volunteers with a local elementary school to ensure the success of her children, as well as that of their respective peers. Ms. Vizguerra Ramirez has also established extraordinarily strong ties to Colorado through her tireless work with numerous community organizations. Several news outlets have documented her commitment to improving the lives of members of her community through her volunteerism and advocacy. It is abundantly clear that Ms. Vizguerra Ramirez is a positive influence in her community, and that she does not pose a threat to those around her. Nevertheless, despite her long-term residence, strong family ties, and extensive community contributions to the U.S., Immigration and Customs Enforcement currently seeks to remove her to her country of origin.

We can no longer afford to sit idly by while our limited tax-payer enforcement dollars are

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

spent producing such untenable outcomes. While our continued inability to modernize our broken immigration system is bad for businesses, the overall economy and the federal deficit, it is completely devastating to hundreds of thousands of families who suffer the consequences every year.

The U.S. House of Representatives has neglected its responsibility to address our broken immigration system for far too long. Every passing day brings devastating consequences to thousands of families throughout our country. Our current enforcement-centric approach is a relic of another time that needlessly destroys families, and leaves thousands of U.S. citizen children without one or more of their parents. This approach runs contrary to our American system of values.

HONORING KHIQUITA "KEKE" YOUNG

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Khiquita "Keke" Young.

Khiquita Young is the founder of Independent Survival Living (ISL) and owner of K's Farm and Ranch in Crystal Springs, MS. ISL originated in Jackson, Mississippi. Young presents agriculture methods at church conferences with families and local farmers and ranchers.

In 2007 Mrs. Young's mother had a stroke that left her disabled on the left side of her body and troubled in her speech. Khiquita was frustrated to discover the lack of assistance for much needed help not only for her mother, but others as well.

This journey led Young to encourage those who are broken spiritually and financially to become self sufficient. It is her desire for the elderly and stroke victims to become independent individuals again. She doesn't want the elderly and stroke victims to depend on others who do not offer genuine help or who neglect disabled people.

Young is a visionary who actively pursues change in destiny. The vision she was given in 2007 was to pursue the mission in agriculture, to establish urban gardens and farms for the elderly and stroke victims. Participation gives them some control in their lives allowing them to manage, operate and become profitable to survive.

Khiquita is the National Women in Agriculture Association Chairwoman of Southwest River Region in Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Khiquita "Keke" Young for being a visionary and giving back to others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall votes No. 5, on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 455, and No. 6, on adoption of H. Res.

455, I was unavoidably detained and unable to cast my votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on these two votes.

HONORING ROBINSON'S GROCERY, LLC

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a rural town minority owned business, Robinson's Grocery, LLC.

Robinson's Grocery, LLC opened for business on November 27, 2006 in Bolton, Mississippi. Mr. Pelvia Rene Robinson, owner and operator, saw a need for a small town grocery store that could supply the community with quality products and friendly service without traveling to the neighboring city, which is approximately six to seven miles away.

As a lifelong resident of Bolton, Mr. Robinson understood the hardships many in the community faced in acquiring necessities, such as, fresh deli meats, eggs, and cheeses. In addition to meat and dairy products, his store offered hot meals, such as chicken and pork or beef ribs and a variety of household items that many in the community would use on a daily basis.

Establishment of Robinson's Grocery rallied the community together, giving the townspeople a sense of community pride knowing that a grocery store was within walking distance, helping to tremendously decrease the need for sometimes weekly trips to neighboring towns for relatively simple household goods and groceries.

Robinson's Grocery grew as various vendors solicited commercial space for their wares on the store shelves. Currently, the store is in the process of renovating and restructuring its look. Upon completion, the store will also provide a fresh look and an overall enhanced shopping experience in addition to new products and services.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Pelvia Robinson and Robinson's Grocery, LLC for its remarkable contribution to the thriving rural Bolton community.

FIRST AFRIKAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DAY

**HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following Proclamation:

Whereas, First Afrikan Presbyterian Church has been and continues to be a beacon of light to our district for the past twenty years; and

Whereas, Reverend Dr. Mark A. Lomax and the members of the First Afrikan Presbyterian Church family today continues to uplift and inspire those in our district; and

Whereas, the First Afrikan Presbyterian Church has been and continues to be a place where citizens are touched spiritually, mentally and physically through outreach ministries and community partnership to aid in building up our district; and

Whereas, this remarkable and tenacious Church of God has given hope to the hopeless, fed the needy and empowered our community for the past twenty (20) years; and

Whereas, this Church has produced many spiritual warriors, people of compassion, people of great courage, fearless leaders and servants to all, but most of all visionaries who have shared not only with their Church, but with DeKalb County their passion to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, the U.S. Representative of the Fourth District of Georgia has set aside this day to honor and recognize the First Afrikan Presbyterian Church family for their leadership and service to our District on this the 20th Anniversary of their founding; now therefore, I, HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR., do hereby proclaim December 8, 2013 as First Afrikan Presbyterian Church Day in the 4th Congressional District of Georgia.

Proclaimed, this 8th day of December, 2013.

IH-30 ACCIDENT

**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 10, 2014*

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues, I want to bring to your attention a most unfortunate incident that has taken place in my home district across one of the most vital and important transportation corridors not only to Texas but to the Nation. Interstate Highway 30 begins in Aledo, Texas, west of Fort Worth and ends in North Little Rock, Arkansas. While not the nation's longest highway, Interstate 30 has some of the heaviest truck and trade traffic in the nation and is essential to national security. Because of our nation's growing population—especially in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex—transportation systems, planned over fifty years ago, are being strained and are over capacity. Because of this, our transportation facilities cannot always accommodate the needs of our constituents. This affects not only transportation commerce and mobility but also hinders the first responders and law enforcement from arriving at the scene of the accident in a timely manner.

Early this morning, on Friday January 10, 2014 a major multi-truck accident took place including as many as fifteen vehicles, including semi-trucks on a section of IH-30 that spans Lake Ray Hubbard. The accident has closed all eight lanes of the bridge, headed east and west. After seven hours, the facility remains closed and as there are no frontage roads across the Lake, commuters and drivers are facing multi-hour delays and the national supply chain is being adversely affected.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to those that were injured in this unfortunate accident. And to all those hundreds of thousands who were inconvenienced.

This is a prime example as to why Interstate 30, and our national transportation system, needs renewed attention at the local, state, and federal level. This is not the first time this has happened and this will certainly not be the last. In 2006, I was pleased to be of assistance in causing IH-30 to be designated a Congressional High Priority Corridor on the