

United States Air Force for ten years. He will forever be remembered by his classmates, teammates, and members of the Altavista community as a warm, welcoming, kind-hearted man. Mr. Mason was a star member of Altavista High School's basketball team, and school principal Ty Gafford and coach Dean Hubbard remember him fondly as a cornerstone of the Altavista community. He left behind a wife of nineteen years, Tammy, who he met while stationed at Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis, New Mexico, and their three sons, KJ, Brandon, and Devin, all of whom currently reside in Clovis.

We are forever grateful for Mr. Mason's years of service in the U.S. Air Force and his continued service and sacrifice in defending our nation. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Mason family, the Altavista and Clovis communities that mourn his loss, and with all of the families who lost loved ones in this tragic incident.

HONORING GIDEON R. BRADY

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gideon R. Brady from St. James, Missouri for his achievements as a cadet in the Civil Air Patrol. Gideon is set to receive the General Billy Mitchell Award for his service, one of the most prestigious honors that a cadet can earn. This award is only achieved after passing comprehensive leadership and aerospace exams, as well as a strenuous physical fitness test.

Gideon began his service in the Civil Air Patrol in 2013 with a deep interest in aerospace and rockets. An emphasis on service runs in Gideon's family, as his father Terry is a Chaplain in the Civil Air Patrol and proudly guides him as he progresses through the ranks.

Gideon has proven himself to be an exemplary cadet and it is my pleasure to recognize him before the United States House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO THE CORNING CENTER FOR THE FINE ARTS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Corning Center for the Fine Arts (CCFA) as they celebrate their 10th anniversary bringing art and culture to southwest Iowa.

CCFA, housed in a renovated and repurposed building in Corning, opened its doors on Sept 30, 2005. Its studio and gallery were modeled to create an attractive environment for its artist in residence program and has two renovated apartments above for those artists. Since 2006, the art center has been home to 16 artists that have come from the United States and abroad. CCFA also holds annual student art shows to encourage young people to explore their talents.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to represent the Corning Center for the Fine Arts and its hard

working employees and volunteers in the United States Congress. I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating them on their 10th anniversary and wishing them nothing but continued success.

HONORING SERGEANT MAJOR GUADALUPE LOPEZ, U.S. ARMY, RETIRED

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished service in both the military and civilian life of Sergeant Major Guadalupe Lopez, U.S. Army, Retired. SGM Lopez has served with distinction as a guardian of this great nation for over 26 years. Today SGM Lopez continues his service to the country he loves in many capacities in the Killeen—Fort Hood community.

SGM Lopez entered the U.S. Army in September 1954. While he served in a multitude of capacities, his fondest memories are of the tour he served in Vietnam. SGM Lopez spent most of his time planning tactical operations against the enemy on the front lines. While in Vietnam, SGM Lopez was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroic actions on Nov 20, 1969 when his helicopter came under heavy fire.

SGM Lopez retired in March of 1980. While the days of a regimented life in uniform have passed, he still finds ways to serve his fellow soldiers. SGM Lopez served as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of America Post Commander for four years. Today SGM Lopez serves as a member of the Ft. Hood Retiree Council, a position assumed in 2008.

SGM Lopez is also well known for his work as the co-chairman of the Killeen Veteran's Day Parade and the Memorial Day Ceremony held at the Central Texas Veteran's Cemetery since 2007. While the long list of accomplishments and service rendered to his fellow soldiers is too lengthy to be enumerated here, I will use SGM Lopez' own words to convey the sense of dedication he has to his friends and veterans: "We are soldiers for life; we hung up only the suit, we're still connected."

I commend SGM Lopez for his selfless service to his nation and to the United States Army. His leadership has positively impacted soldiers and families that he has served. May we all strive to live a life full of service such as his.

TAKING ACTION ON EUROPE'S WORST REFUGEE CRISIS SINCE WORLD WAR II

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday I convened a Helsinki Commission hearing to scrutinize the European refugee crisis and help determine the most effective ways in which the U.S., the European Union, and the OSCE can and should respond.

The Syrian displacement crisis that has consumed seven countries in the Middle East has become the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. At least 250,000 people have been killed in Syria's civil war, many of them civilians.

The security forces of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's security forces have been responsible for many of these killings, targeting neighborhoods with barrel bombs and shooting civilians point-blank. ISIS has committed genocide, mass atrocities, and war crimes, against Christians and other minorities, and likewise targeted, brutalized and killed Shia and Sunni Muslims who reject its ideology and brutality.

Fleeing for safety, more than four million Syrians are refugees, the largest refugee population in the world, and another 7.6 million Syrians are displaced inside their home country.

Syria's neighbors—Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt—are hosting most of these refugees. Before the Syria crisis, these countries struggled with high rates of unemployment, strained public services, and a range of other domestic challenges. Since the conflict began, Syrian refugees have become a quarter of Lebanon's population, and Iraq, which has been beset by ISIS and sectarian conflict, is hosting almost 250,000 refugees from Syria.

Until this past summer, few Syrian refugees went beyond countries that border their homeland. Syrian refugees and migrants from a range of countries have since come to Europe in such large numbers, and so quickly, that many European countries, especially front-line entry points like Greece, transit countries like Serbia, and destination countries like Germany, have been challenged to respond.

The UN High Commission for Refugees, UNHCR, reports that more than 635,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in Europe by sea in 2015. Fifty three percent of these people are from Syria, sixteen percent from Afghanistan, six percent from Eritrea, and five percent from Iraq. Notably, only fourteen percent of them are women, twenty percent are children, and the remaining sixty five percent are men.

The European crisis requires a response that is European, national, and international, and the United States is essential to it. There must be effective coordination and communication directly between countries as well as through and with entities like the OSCE and European Union. Individual countries also must have the flexibility to respond best to the particular circumstances in their own countries.

The response must address "push" factors, like economic challenges and aid short-falls in countries like Syria's neighbors that have been hosting refugees. It must also address "pull" factors, like decisions individual European countries have made that have attracted refugees.

There is real human need and desperation. Refugees are entrusting themselves to smugglers and where there is human smuggling there is a higher risk of human trafficking. I am especially concerned about the risk of abuse, exploitation, and enslavement, of women and children. Already we are hearing reports that some European countries are failing to protect women and girls from sexual assault and forced prostitution. The lack of separate bathroom facilities for males and females, rooms

that can be locked, and other basic measures, enable such attacks. There is no excuse for such failures and everything must be done to ensure that women and children are safe.

There is also the real threat that terrorist groups like ISIS will infiltrate these massive movements of people to kill civilians in Europe and beyond. I am deeply concerned that the screening at many European borders is inadequate and putting lives at risk. All of us must be responsive to the humanitarian needs without compromising one iota on security. European response plans should include specifics about strengthening security screening throughout the European region.

During the conflict in Kosovo, I travelled to Stenkovec refugee camp in Macedonia and was at the McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey to welcome some of the 4,400 people brought from there to the United States. A refugee—Agron Abdullahu—was apprehended and sent to jail in 2008 for supplying guns and ammunition to the “Fort Dix 5”—a group of terrorists who were also sent to prison for plotting to kill American soldiers at the Fort Dix military installation.

Given Secretary Kerry’s announcement in September that the United States intends to resettle at least 85,000 refugees in fiscal year 2016, including at least 10,000 Syrians, and at least 100,000 refugees in fiscal year 2017, the United States and Europe must be on high alert to weed out terrorists from real refugees. Because religious and ethnic minorities often have additional risks and vulnerabilities even as refugees, they should be prioritized for resettlement.

Tuesday’s hearing examined the “who” is arriving, the “why” they are coming to Europe, and the “what” has been done and should be done in response. European governments, entities like the OSCE and the EU, and civil society all have critical roles to play.

The United States has been the leading donor to the humanitarian crisis inside Syria and refugee crisis in the region. We also have the largest refugee admissions program in the world. However, according to Tuesday’s testimony from Shelly Pitterman, Regional Representative for the UN High Commission for Refugees, “The current inter-agency Syrian Regional Refugee and Resilience (3RP) plan for 2015 is only 41 percent funded, which has meant cuts in food aid for thousands of refugees.”

Globally, he warned, “The humanitarian system is financially broke. We are no longer able to meet even the absolute minimum requirements of core protection and lifesaving assistance to preserve the human dignity of the people we care for. The current funding level for the 33 UN appeals to provide humanitarian assistance to 82 million people around the world is only 42 percent. UNHCR expects to receive just 47 percent of the funding we need this year.”

At the hearing, Sean Callahan, Chief Operating Officer of Catholic Relief Services, said, “As global leaders in the international humanitarian and refugee response, the U.S. and Eu-

rope must heed Pope Francis’ call and find new ways to alleviate the suffering and protect the vulnerable.” I could not agree more. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the United States and Europe have come together to address the great challenges of our time and this is an opportunity to do so again.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today’s RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

OCTOBER 27

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine United States military strategy in the Middle East.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement’s proposed Stream Protection Rule.

SD-366

Committee on Finance

To hold hearings to examine the Internal Revenue Service’s response to Committee recommendations contained in its August 5, 2015 report.

SD-215

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing on the Administration’s response to the Syrian conflict.

SVC-217

1:30 p.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency to examine ongoing challenges at the Secret Service and their government-wide implications.

HVC-210

OCTOBER 28

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the United States role and strategy in the Middle East.

SD-419

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the state of rural banking, focusing on challenges and consequences.

SD-538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Jessica Rosenworcel, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of five years from July 1, 2015.

SR-253

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

To hold hearings to examine realizing the potential of the Department of Energy national laboratories.

SD-138

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security

To hold hearings to examine retirement plan options for small businesses.

SH-216

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the state of our nation’s biodefense.

SD-342

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

To hold hearings to examine Department of Veterans Affairs mental health, focusing on ensuring access to care.

SR-418

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Peter William Bodde, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to Libya, Marc Jonathan Sievers, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Elisabeth I. Millard, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tajikistan, and Kenneth Damian Ward, of Virginia, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, all of the Department of State, and John Morton, of Massachusetts, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

SD-419

OCTOBER 29

10 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs).

SD-419