

for Children Partnership, and the Gold Medal for Lifesaving from the Grande Prix Humanitaire de France.

These awards and accolades are testimony to Gerry's quality as a leader and the determination with which he approached his work. One need look no further than his own Mount Vernon district for evidence of this. Whether it was shepherding the community through the BRAC process and helping to manage the enormous growth at Fort Belvoir, to the establishment of the Richmond Highway Express Bus Route, the creation of the South County Government Center, advocating for the construction of a new high school and middle school to serve the growing population, the preservation of Inova's Mount Vernon facilities or the securing of affordable housing for seniors at Gum Springs, you could always count on Gerry Hyland being knowledgeable and fully engaged with every situation that was brought to him. Gerry truly cares about his constituents and has dedicated every minute of his time in office to improving their lives and our South County community.

I will always remember the grace with which he approached his work. Even in the face of unimaginable tragedy brought by the death of his wife, he continued to put the needs of others before his own. When we served together on the Board of Supervisors, he would routinely bring fresh produce from his farm on the Eastern Shore to share with us, a tradition that continues to this day. Just when you didn't think it was possible for one man to give any more, Gerry would prove you wrong.

Mr. Speaker, Gerry Hyland has been a fixture of the community in Fairfax County for more than 35 years. While he may be officially retiring from the Board of Supervisors, I suspect that he will remain an active advocate for the causes that are dear to him. I ask my colleagues to please join me in congratulating him on his retirement, in thanking him for his immeasurable dedication and commitment to our community, and in wishing him all the best for continued health and success.

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IN RECOGNITION OF MAJOR ADAM F. MCCOMBS

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**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Major Adam F. McCombs for his exemplary dedication to duty and his service to the United States Army and to our great nation. Most recently, Adam served as an Army Congressional Fellow and Congressional Budget Liaison for the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller). He will be transitioning from his present assignment to serve as an Advisor in the Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard, United States Army.

A native of Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, Adam was commissioned as an Armor officer after his graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point with a Bachelor of Science degree. He has since earned a Master's degree in Legislative Affairs from the George Washington University.

Adam has served in a broad range of assignments during his Army career. Prior to

working as an Army Congressional Budget Liaison, Adam's assignments included serving as Scout Platoon Leader and Troop Executive Officer in 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, Colorado; Company Commander of a Warrior Transition Company at Fort Knox, Kentucky; and Assistant S3 in the 25th Infantry Division Headquarters Battalion and Cavalry Troop Commander in 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. Adam has commanded Soldiers in combat as a Platoon Leader and Troop Commander. He deployed in direct support of combat operations in Iraq in 2005–2006, and deployed to Afghanistan in 2008–2009 and again in 2011–2012.

The Second Congressional District of Georgia gained a compassionate and knowledgeable resource in 2013 when Adam was selected to work in my Washington, D.C. office as an Army Congressional Fellow. In this capacity, Adam handled military and veterans issues from a legislative and casework perspective and worked closely with the staff on the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee.

Next, in his role as a Congressional Budget Liaison, he continued to collaborate with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, ensuring that the Army's budget positions were extremely well represented and articulated to the Committees.

Major Adam McCombs' leadership throughout his career has positively impacted his Soldiers, peers, and superiors. Our country has been enriched by his extraordinary leadership, thoughtful judgment, and exemplary work.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife, Vivian, the more than 730,000 residents of Georgia's Second Congressional District, and all Americans, in extending our sincerest appreciation to Major Adam F. McCombs for his distinguished service to our nation. In addition to gratitude for his selfless service and instrumental role in supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Major McCombs has the respect, admiration, and affection of many on Capitol Hill. We wish him and his wife, Traci, all the best as they continue their journey in the United States Army.

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U.S.-GEORGIA RELATIONS

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**HON. TED POE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as co-chair of the Georgia Caucus along with Congressman GERALD CONNOLLY, I would like to take a moment to discuss the importance of a strong U.S.-Georgia relationship.

Our ally Georgia is a beacon of hope for democracy and capitalism in Eastern Europe. In a region full of turmoil, Georgia continuously strives to spread the ideologies of democracy and freedom to all. While there is still work to be done, Georgia has made many advances in recent years to strengthen democratic values.

Georgia has proved to be a strategic trade partner. U.S. trade with Georgia has increased over the past several years as Georgia continues to bolster its democratic and market-economy institutions. In light of this growth, it

would be a smart move to initiate negotiations on a U.S.-Georgia Free Trade Agreement. In 2012, President Obama announced that Georgia and the U.S. had agreed to a high-level dialogue to strengthen trade relations, including the possibility of a free trade agreement. Now is the time to make this idea a reality.

Another critical reason why we must strengthen our ties with Georgia is because Russian aggression in the region is more threatening now than ever. In 2008, I was in Georgia and saw Russian tanks roll in to Georgia, occupying 25% of the country. Back then I knew Putin's radical agenda would continue to threaten our ally for years to come. Sadly, I have not been proven wrong. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is another example of Putin's greedy appetite for conquest. The best deterrent we can offer Georgia is the protection we have given to European countries in the past from Russian bullying: NATO membership. It is time for the United States to put our full weight of support into ensuring that Georgia is given NATO membership.

Even with the regional security threats stemming from Russia, Georgia has demonstrated time and again its commitment to being a force for good in the international community. For example, Georgia has provided more troops to the effort in Afghanistan than any other non-NATO member. Georgian troops have fought and died on the battlefield alongside our own American troops. We must recognize and reward their bravery and sacrifice. Georgia's ascension to NATO must be a priority for next summer's NATO conference.

Mr. Speaker, we all should recognize the importance of strengthening our relationship with Georgia. It is in our national security interests to support this ally, and it is our duty to ensure we foster a healthy, mutually beneficial partnership.

And that's just the way it is.

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MEDIA IGNORE ADMINISTRATION SCANDALS

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**HON. LAMAR SMITH**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the national liberal media repeatedly comment that the current administration is "scandal free." But that's because they ignore scandals involving Democrats.

For example, Hillary Clinton claims that everyone knew she used a private email server as Secretary of State. Yet, White House officials stated they were unaware of the server. The media has yet to pursue what was known or why the use of this server was allowed.

The national media also has failed to uncover who gave the orders for the IRS to target conservatives or if White House officials helped cover up the incident.

And when an American is murdered by an illegal immigrant, the press never connects the loss of life to the president's refusal to enforce our immigration laws.

The only people who believe the administration is "scandal free" are its allies in the national liberal media.

## RECOGNIZING BANDERA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EMPLOYEES

## HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize three power linemen from the Bandera Electric Cooperative: Jay Rasberry, John Hernandez and Garrett Clark. These linemen volunteered for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Foundation and spent three weeks in northern Haiti building and upgrading power lines. These efforts have helped communities in Haiti receive affordable, safe and reliable energy.

These three power linemen worked side by side with NRECA International on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Pilot Project for Sustainable Electricity Distribution. This project commercializes power from the Caracol Industrial Park generation station that is currently serving 8,000 consumers in Caracol and surrounding communities with electricity 24 hours a day. When the project is complete, a total of 10,000 consumers will have access to electricity.

Less than 15% of the people in Haiti have access to electricity. The service and sacrifice of these linemen will impact the lives of thousands of Haitians resulting in improvements in healthcare, education, and economic opportunity.

In appreciation of all they have done, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking them for their humanitarian efforts.

## HONORING STEPHEN COOK

## HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stephen Cook for being awarded the American FFA Degree as a member of the National FFA Organization. Stephen is a member of the Willow Springs Chapter of the FFA and, with four of its other members, received this prestigious award. He is also currently on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps, making this accomplishment even more impressive. FFA is an intercurricular student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership consisting of 629,367 members, aged 12–21. Stephen is among the 463 FFA members from Missouri that received the American FFA degree, marking the highest number of recipients from any state.

As a past recipient of the American FFA Degree, I offer my highest congratulations as I understand the hard work and effort required to reach this goal. In order to obtain the American FFA Degree, a member must begin their pursuit of the award during their freshman year of high school through participation in every level of the organization and leadership events.

As a former member of FFA, I can proudly say that my experience in the organization was invaluable learning about leadership skills and public speaking. It is my pleasure to rec-

ognize Stephen Cook for receiving this prominent award and thank him for his service to our county before the United States House of Representatives.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE 21ST CENTURY POWER GRID ACT

## HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the 21st Century Power Grid Act. The bill would finance public-private partnerships to carry out innovative projects related to the modernization of the electric grid.

Unfortunately, today the U.S. electric grid is still operating in the 20th Century. We must act now to improve grid reliability, flexibility, efficiency and security. There are literally a limitless number of ways in which the federal government can play a part to help modernize the electric grid. What we cannot afford is the status quo.

Whether it's the application of digital technologies, advanced communications and control, distributed energy resources, resilience, cybersecurity, or providing customers with more choice in energy source, usage and rates; it's a completely new world for how we can generate, distribute and consume electricity.

The federal government—in partnership with state and local governments, the private sector and ratepayers—must play a role in developing a strategy for the modernization of the electric grid and be an investor in the research, development and deployment of new advanced technologies.

The 21st Century Power Grid Act would direct the Department of Energy to provide assistance, in the form of grants or cooperative agreements, to help advance the future grid. In order to be eligible to receive this assistance, utilities can partner with entities such as national labs, universities, or state and local governments to develop or demonstrate new grid technologies or energy management techniques.

Most have heard the term “smart grid,” but I’m not sure many appreciate how truly revolutionary it could be if we were to achieve a smarter grid. “Imagine a city in the middle of a deep freeze. The local power grid is struggling to keep up with everyone’s heaters. What if the grid could automatically communicate with buildings in the area and negotiate reduced power consumption in exchange for a financial incentive? A large hotel that’s only half-full due to the weather could dial back its thermostats, saving money on their bill and enabling the grid to divert that energy to homes and schools.”

This scenario was taken directly from the website of one of our national labs, the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. PNNL and their partners recently completed a two year project that successfully demonstrated that this sort of communication and cooperative energy usage is possible.

In your own home, imagine if you could throw dishes in the dishwasher or clothes in the dryer and then set the device to automatically start when you can pay the optimal rate for electricity. This is a win, win. Consumers

pay less, and utilities can more efficiently manage peak loads.

And the scenarios I’ve described don’t even begin to scratch the surface of the potential for better integration of distributed energy sources like solar, wind and geothermal; energy storage capabilities; or other advances that only become conceivable when you do the type of basic research this country has always supported and excelled in.

To not provide the Department of Energy with resources to invest in smart grid research and development would be akin to preventing the National Institutes of Health from doing medical cures research. The electric grid is an indispensable element of modern society and is critical to our national security, economy and the general well-being of the citizenry.

I urge my colleagues to support the 21st Century Power Grid Act.

## OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

## HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,789,199,596,566.93. We’ve added \$8,162,322,547,653.85 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

## CLASS 1A—ARCOLA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM STATE CHAMPIONS

## HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Purple Raiders of Arcola Jr. High School as the IHSA Class 1A high school state champions.

On November 27, 2015 Arcola defeated Stark County by 35–17 winning the Class 1A State Championship. I would like to recognize the effort of this amazing team and congratulate them on their historic season as they celebrate their first state championship title in 27 years.

I would also like to congratulate the Strader family. Brothers Clayton and Connor and their cousin Chase for contributing to six touchdowns and several tackles. Tommy Eddleman, Jim Fishel, Aldo Garcia, Chad Hopkins, Jarod Kiger, and John Lidy make up the coaching staff which supported Athletic Director and Head Coach, Zach Zehr to provide great leadership for these talented football players.

I look forward to the continued success of the Arcola Jr. High School. I extend my best wishes for another outstanding season next year.

The following are Arcola Purple Raider Varsity Football players: Conner Strader, Clayton Strader, Parker Ingram, Kollin Seaman, Martin