

one of the most restrictive photo ID laws in the nation. Under this pernicious voter ID law, only a handful of photo IDs can be used at polling places.

When the State of Alabama started requiring a photo ID to vote, officials claimed it would reduce voter fraud. The reality is that voter fraud is rare—but the end results are that more than 250,000 Alabamians without a photo ID have been disenfranchised. Many of the disenfranchised are African-Americans, low-income individuals, senior citizens, and the disabled.

This past October, Alabama lawmakers decided to make this bad law even worse by reducing services at 34 DMVs across the state. Driver's licenses are the most popular form of ID used at the polls—and 8 out of the 10 counties in Alabama that are impacted have the highest percentage of black registered voters in the state. How is this not discriminatory?

I fully support the federal lawsuit filed by the Greater Birmingham Ministries and the Alabama NAACP, challenging the photo ID law in our state. I have repeatedly argued that Alabama's photo ID law is a renewed assault on voting rights.

I also applaud the U.S. Department of Transportation's decision to investigate the reduction of services at the 34 DMVs in question for a possible violation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Alabama cannot balance its budget on the backs of those who can least afford it, nor infringe upon the civil rights of minorities by limiting access to the most popular form of identification used to vote.

Voting is at the heart of our democracy. It's our most fundamental right—and duty—as Americans. I am a proud Alabamian, so it disappoints me that for every two steps Alabama takes forward, we take one step back.

Voting should be made easier—not harder—so that no voices are excluded and that every citizen can cast their vote without any unnecessary or unwarranted barriers.

Alabama recently reached a settlement with the Department of Justice to settle claims that the state did not fully comply with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. An investigation by the Department of Justice found that Alabama had largely failed to provide opportunities for Alabamians to register to vote when they applied for or renewed a driver's license.

Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed a number of attempts—not just in Alabama—but across the country to restrict the vote. I stand before you today to urge Congress to restore the vote. Representatives LINDA SÁNCHEZ, JUDY CHU and I introduced the Voting Rights Advancement Act in June to stop the renewed assault on voting rights, and to restore preclearance for states like Alabama where new barriers to voting threaten to silence the most vulnerable voices in our electorate.

We cannot take for granted the battles endured by those who came before us, nor can we neglect our own responsibilities to ensure liberty and justice. The struggle continues, and each of us must do our part to further the cause of human and civil rights for all Americans.

We must restore the voices of the excluded—Congress must act today to restore the vote.

#### IMPACT OF THE ARTS ON STUDENTS AT SAVOY ELEMENTARY

##### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the remarkable impact of art on the educational performance of the students at Savoy Elementary, a public school in my district.

Savoy Elementary Anacostia, located here in the nation's capital, is one of eight pilot schools of Turnaround Arts, a signature program of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Turnaround Arts has had clear, life-changing impacts on the students of Savoy—attendance is up, discipline referrals are down, and the school has made double-digit gains in math and reading scores.

The Savoy Players are a performing group at Savoy Elementary. Led by Carol Foster, a legendary arts leader in the national capital region, this group has been hugely successful. To be part of this group, students must exhibit maturity, grit, excellent attendance, and good grades. The professionalism, spirit, and magnetism of this group has catapulted them into the limelight.

In addition to countless performances for their school community, they have had four performances at the White House, performed with Brian McKnight at the Warner Theater, and brought down the house at the Kennedy Center. But, most importantly, singing, dancing and performing has brought them the joy, meaning, and purpose that every child should experience.

Mr. Speaker, in this holiday season, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the clear benefit exposure to the arts has made for the children of Savoy Elementary, and hope that the new education legislation will bring similar opportunities to kids across the country.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE AVONTE'S LAW ACT OF 2015

##### HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill, the Avonte's Law Act of 2015, which was inspired by the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Avonte Oquendo of Queens, New York. Avonte was an autistic child who wandered away from his school. His lifeless body was not found for more than a month. "Wandering" is very common in children with autism and other disabilities, and sometimes children who wander are non-verbal or cannot communicate well with others, leading to dangerous interactions with strangers or even law enforcement.

This bill authorizes a new grant program within the United States Department of Justice to provide local law enforcement agencies with the resources to procure response tools and increase education and training for first responders, schools, and families with the goal of preventing situations like Avonte's from happening again.

The bill also requires the Attorney General to establish standards and best practices for the administration of any type of voluntary "tracking" system used by law enforcement agencies that are awarded these funds. Tracking devices are one of the many ways we can help prevent another tragic situation like Avonte's.

Mr. Speaker, by taking a holistic approach to this issue, we can help children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) live safe and happy lives all around the country.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE NODAWAY VALLEY BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

##### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Nodaway Valley High School Boys Cross Country team for winning the Iowa Class 1A State Cross Country Championship.

I would like to congratulate each member of the team:

Runners: Nathan Venteicher, Shane Breheny, Heath Downing, Brayten Funke, Dallas Kraeger, Skyler Rawlings, and Brycen Wallace;

Head Coach: Darrell Burmeister; and Assistant Coaches: Dave Swanson, Phyllis Eshelman, and Alyse Dreher.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this team and their coaches demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent them in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating the team for competing in this rigorous competition and wishing them all nothing but continued success.

#### LEGISLATION ALLOWING COMBAT VETERANS AN EXTENDED TIME TO FILE FOR REFUND

##### HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will allow members of our military services to file their taxes long after they were due in order to provide an adequate window to claim refunds or credits that may have been owed.

It has come to my attention that some members of our armed forces, in their haste to rejoin civilian life, can occasionally let fall by the wayside tax returns—particularly those that may actually have a refund. While tax liability can follow a taxpayer forever—plus interest and penalties—taxpayers only have a couple years in which to claim a credit or a refund.

This legislation widens the opportunity for a veteran to look back, realize a missed opportunity, and remedy the situation. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this solution.

## TRIBUTE TO TIM SESSIONS

**HON. MARK WALKER**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Tim Sessions has served his community for more than thirty years.

His life is an example of a rare instinctive trait that actually puts others first. I have personally witnessed the vast amount of people who regularly reach out to Mr. Sessions for guidance or help.

From the senior adult in the elderly care center to the child in need, Tim Sessions finds a way to solve the problem or meet the need.

His work as Mayor of Summerfield was another way that Mr. Sessions chose to give back to his town. His vision and his ability to execute has moved Summerfield to a better place for years to come.

Our community owes the Honorable Sessions a debt of gratitude. His friends and neighbors know that he walks the walk with integrity and grace. We all owe him a "thank you" for a lifetime of putting his fellow man first.

**AIKEN NAMED MAIN STREET COMMUNITY****HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week, Aiken was named a Main Street Community—one of only two communities to receive this honor from Main Street South Carolina. The Main Street Community designation provides Aiken with a comprehensive training and assistance to revitalize their downtown through a three year boot-camp program. Aiken joins Orangeburg as the second community in South Carolina's Second Congressional District to receive the Main Street Community designation.

After a competitive application process, the city of Aiken was recognized for their work in promoting historic and economic development downtown. In the next few years, they will work with Main Street South Carolina to identify the goals of its community and to provide residents, business owners, and local leaders with key resources to enhance the local economic development.

I am grateful to Mayor Rick Osbon, former Mayor Fred Cavanaugh, City Manager John Klimm, and the entire Aiken City Council for receiving this great honor. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this will bring to Aiken.

In conclusion, God Bless Our Troops and may the President by his actions never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

## HONORING REVEREND SAMUEL LITTLEJOHN

**HON. MARC A. VEASEY**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend Samuel Littlejohn's 50th anniversary as a spiritual leader and Pastor of Shining Light Missionary Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

Reverend Littlejohn was born in Tyler, Texas, to a Baptist minister and a family dedicated to the church. As a young child, his mother, father, and grandfather all instilled an abiding love for and sustaining commitment to his religion. He was baptized at the age of seven at the Greater Hopwell Missionary Baptist Church in Tyler, where he remained a member until he moved to Fort Worth to pursue seminary studies.

In 1951, Reverend Littlejohn moved to Fort Worth and joined Pilgrim Valley Missionary Baptist Church. He served as the Superintendent of the Sunday school, participated in the Senior Choir, and acted as the President of the #2 Usher Department.

Reverend Littlejohn continued his seminary education by earning a missionary degree from Southwest Theological Seminary and Bishop College. In November 1960, Reverend Littlejohn was ordained and gave his first sermon in front of Pilgrim Valley church.

He served the Pilgrim Valley community until 1965, when he was called to pastor Shining Light Missionary Baptist Church, where he has served for the last 50 years.

Along with his work in his church communities, Reverend Littlejohn has continued to be an active and vocal participant in the community. Pastor Littlejohn has worked with the Community Action Agency (CAA), was an organizing member of the first Ministers and Police Taskforce and served as a member of Parent, Preacher, and Principal organization which worked with Fort Worth Independent School District to encourage children to stay in school.

Most notably, Pastor Littlejohn was the driving force behind the Stop Six Community Health Center. Reverend Littlejohn was a founding member of the Stop Six Community Corporation and much of the success of the organization can be attributed to the Reverend. His work greatly impacted the DFW community and is now used as a model in other cities.

Earlier this year, the Black Pastors, Clergy and Ministerial Group Association of Texas, Inc. presented Pastor Littlejohn with the "Living Legend Award" and recognized him as one of the honorable senior pastors in Fort Worth.

## TRIBUTE TO LEONARD AND MARYANN BRYAN

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Leonard and Maryann Bryan of Council Bluffs, Iowa, on

the very special occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married in 1965.

Leonard and Maryann's lifelong commitment to each other and their children, Steven, Traci, and Cari, their grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, truly embodies our Iowa values. It is families like the Bryans that make me proud to call myself an Iowan and represent the people of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this great couple on their 50th year together and I wish them many more. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating them on this momentous occasion.

## HONORING THE GRAND OPENING OF SOUTHLAKE'S SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

**HON. KENNY MARCHANT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the City of Southlake's grand opening of the Southlake Senior Activity Center.

The history of the Southlake senior center began in 1998, when Mayor Gail Eubanks, Southlake's first mayor, donated the original facility to the city to serve as the activity and social center for the growing senior community in Southlake. Since the opening of the original senior center, the population of Southlake has nearly doubled in size. To accommodate the needs of this growing community, plans were developed and approved for the construction of a new community recreation center. On September 27, 2014, the City of Southlake broke ground for the construction of the new, state of the art, recreation and senior center known as The Marq.

The Marq contains over 20,000 square feet of multipurpose space which includes a senior lounge, senior wellness room, game room, banquet hall, and amphitheater. In it, the new Southlake Senior Activity Center will serve the community by providing programs and services to Southlake area seniors, enhancing their lives and fostering a sense of community among the city's residents.

I am extremely appreciative of the City of Southlake and the Southlake Senior Activity Center for continuing to address the needs of the community by enhancing the quality of their infrastructure and the lives of its seniors. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 24th Congressional District of Texas, I ask all my distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the City of Southlake and the Southlake Senior Activity Center on the grand opening of their new facility.

## ACKNOWLEDGING THE ASSOCIATION FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

**HON. DONALD S. BEYER, JR.**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 15, 2015*

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the Association for Talent Development (ATD) as the largest association dedicated to the training and talent development