

I extend my deepest congratulations to Austin Gut for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING CHARLES ALEXANDER VELAZQUEZ

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Charles Alexander Velazquez. Alex is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 43, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Alex has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Alex has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Alex has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. Alex installed a 20 foot flagpole for the St. Joseph Youth Soccer Association in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Charles Alexander Velazquez for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF CAPTAIN WAYNE HOSS, SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Wayne Hoss who is retiring as a Captain in the San Mateo Police Department after 28 years of distinguished service. The San Mateo Police Department relied heavily upon the talents of Captain Hoss over his decades of service, as indicated by the extraordinary range of responsibilities that he held while with the department.

Wayne Hoss worked in every major aspect of department operations, always giving outstanding service. He was initially assigned to patrol and then to Investigations. He kept his investigations skills well-honed throughout his career and later used these skills repeatedly during the times my district office and I relied upon Captain Hoss to respond to security concerns. In addition to working in Investigations, Wayne Hoss also worked in Field Operations, Special Operations, and the Street Crimes Suppression Team. Seeing his talent as an officer, the department assigned Wayne Hoss as a training officer. Noticing that he could manage a computer and other new technology better than many in the department, probably including many Chiefs and more senior personnel, Wayne Hoss was given oversight of technology-related projects

He conducted neighborhood traffic patrols and worked in the K-9 unit. Narcotics, SWAT, major crimes and internal affairs were also entrusted to Captain Hoss as he rose through the ranks. He also worked on the most serious crimes impacting the community including robbery, homicide and sexual assault. As you can see from this unusually broad list, there were very few responsibilities that he did not have during his 28 years of service to the people of San Mateo. I am sure that he has many stories of difficult situations and also wonderful outcomes from the cases that he handled and the people he touched over these years.

My staff and I found Captain Hoss to be highly responsive. He would anticipate our concerns, raise our awareness about security, and inform us about other activities in the community that we needed to know about in order to do our jobs better. His department noted in its letter to us that he worked hard to build trust with the community. We can say from our own experience that Captain Hoss was exceptional in the thoroughness of his communications and the support that he offered.

San Mateo is a diverse city with a high quality of life. Its success is due in part to the dedication of the men and women of the San Mateo Police Department who face big-city policing challenges but also work in a city with a tight-knit sense of community. As spokesperson for the police department, leader and mentor, Wayne Hoss helped to create this quality of life and the tight relationship that the department has with populations originating from around the globe. I am sure that many of the skills that he demonstrated in San Mateo originated with his service in our nation's armed forces as a military police officer. MP's have to cope with many unusual situations and sometimes extremely dangerous operating conditions. I want to offer my appreciation to this veteran who turned his military experience into service to his neighbors and friends in civilian life.

In closing, I want to salute Captain Hoss upon the occasion of his retirement from the police department and the city that he served. He was a talented carpenter on a team that is adept at getting a tough job done right the first time. Retirement for a professional with enormous talent is merely a stepping stone to the next adventure. We thank Captain Hoss for his time in service to us all and wish him all the best in these next adventurous years.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY FRAUD AND ERROR PREVENTION ACT

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, for nearly 80 years, Social Security has been the bedrock of economic security for American families. Generations of Americans have contributed to Social Security with every paycheck, earning birth-to-death protection for themselves and their families. As a result of their contributions—\$16.1 trillion over Social Security's lifetime—Social Security currently has a \$2.8 trillion surplus.

Social Security benefits are modest—about \$15,000 a year for an average senior and

even less for a disabled worker—but for most recipients, their Social Security paycheck is more than half their monthly income.

As a representative of those Americans and the Ranking Democrat on the Social Security Subcommittee, I believe we have no more important responsibility than to make sure that Americans receive their earned Social Security benefits on time and in full. That means protecting Social Security beneficiaries from criminals and fraudsters who try to scam them out of their benefits, and it also means protecting Social Security's trust funds against fraud and errors so the money is available to pay earned benefits. And it means doing so in a way that does not delay needed benefits for honest, hard-working Americans.

On occasion Social Security will provide a recipient more than they are entitled to. That overpayment rate is only a fraction of one percent (0.22%). Most of these overpayments are due to errors, but a small part is due to fraud. Social Security employees believe—and I agree with them—that we could do more to safeguard Social Security.

Recently the Social Security Administration uncovered fraud conspiracies where Social Security contributions made by honest Americans were stolen to pay benefits to people who didn't earn them. In one of the conspiracies, the ringleaders even instructed people to pretend they were disabled as a result of the tragic events of September 11. Social Security's fraud investigators have also uncovered rings of criminals who electronically divert Americans' Social Security checks into their own bank accounts.

The good news is, when you invest in training highly qualified employees to protect Social Security, it pays off. Social Security's front-line employees uncovered those recent cases of fraud. With the help of Social Security's trained investigators, the ringleaders have been charged with felonies, the beneficiaries have been made whole, and Social Security has begun the process of recovering the money stolen from the trust fund.

But the bad news is that these conspiracies show that Social Security is a tempting target for those willing to break the law. Recent Republican budget cuts have made it harder for Social Security to develop and use effective tools to fight them.

That's why, over a year ago, my colleagues and I decided Congress needed to do its part to protect Social Security. We introduced the Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act. Our bill would have given Social Security new tools to find fraud and errors, recoup money that should be in the trust funds, and thrown the book at people who steal from Social Security.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress failed to act on our proposal and continued to shortchange Social Security's budget. This lack of leadership has had consequences for Americans.

For example, Republican budget cuts mean Social Security has fewer fraud cops on the beat than it had five years ago. Our bill would guarantee Social Security's fraud-fighting budget, expand SSA's special fraud-busting investigative units to cover all 50 states, and increase prosecutions of people who steal from Social Security.

Social Security has lost more than 5,000 front-line workers to budget cuts. And Republicans in Congress blocked hundreds of millions of dollars that the Budget Control Act authorized for SSA's most cost-effective methods of preventing waste, fraud and abuse.

Today, we are reintroducing the Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act, which would provide SSA with guaranteed funding for its most effective strategies to prevent fraud and errors. The bill will also provide additional resources to recoup benefits that shouldn't have been paid, along with penalties, if the payments were the result of fraud.

Our measure would demand something in exchange for the guaranteed money: complete transparency and accountability. Social Security could only use the dedicated funds for the most important and effective strategies. SSA would have to report annually to Congress how much was spent and what savings their efforts generated for Social Security's trust funds. And the new funds would only be available for additional fraud and error fighting—not to replace what SSA is already spending out of its regular budget.

Our bill isn't the complete answer to protecting Social Security's trust fund. As we consulted Social Security employees, managers, experts, and beneficiary advocates, they all told us the same thing: the best defense against fraud and errors is a well-staffed, well-trained SSA. And for that to happen, Republicans in Congress have to agree to fund SSA's overall budget.

But providing guaranteed funding to fight fraud will at least spare SSA from having to choose between preventing fraud and processing applications so that Americans receive the benefits they earned on time and in full.

I hope we can work together in a bipartisan way to enact this bill and protect Social Security.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF SCOTT JOHNSON TO THE TENTH DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to a dedicated staffer in the office of the Tenth Congressional District of Florida. Scott Johnson will soon be moving on to new opportunities at the House Committee on the Judiciary.

Scott has done a wonderful job serving the people of Florida's Tenth District since he joined my staff in October 2013. As the face of my DC front office, he has welcomed visitors to my office and to the People's House, and demonstrated the responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the people of Florida's Tenth District that this institution was formulated to reflect. Scott is enthusiastic, hard-working, and dedicated to service. He has been a valuable asset to the people of Florida.

While I am sad to see Scott leave, I am grateful for his service. He will be truly missed in the office. I wish him success and fulfillment in his new position, knowing that his character and talents will assure him both, in this and any new adventure he chooses.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 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 \$18,152,428,120,668.55. We've added \$7,525,551,071,755.47 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

MIRIAM GALVAN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Miriam Galvan for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Miriam Galvan is a 12th grader at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Miriam Galvan is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Miriam Galvan for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

HONORING SPENCER COLE GOULDSMITH

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Spencer Cole Gouldsmith. Spencer is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 264, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Spencer has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Spencer has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Spencer has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Spencer Cole Gouldsmith for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING DR. KENNETH DOBBINS

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Dr. Kenneth Dobbins for his significant contributions to Missouri's higher education system over the past two decades. After a distinguished fifteen year tenure, Dr. Dobbins has announced his plans to retire from his position as the president of Southeast Missouri State University at the end of this year's spring semester. His leadership will be difficult to replace and will undoubtedly be missed.

During his tenure as president of Southeast Missouri State University, the university and its programs were nationally recognized by prestigious publications such as U.S. News and the Princeton Review. SMSU increased access to higher education for many Missourians, and enrollment increased steadily each year under Dr. Dobbins' leadership. In 1994, only about 7,900 students attended SMSU. But, as a result of his continued guidance, enrollment for the fall semester of 2014 has increased to 12,087 students.

This gradual increase in enrollment is attributed to Dr. Dobbins' goal of making Southeast Missouri State University's enrollment representative of diversity of the state of Missouri. Moreover, throughout Dr. Dobbins' tenure access to higher education increased dramatically with record enrollments in the SMSU's 25-county service region as a result of regional campuses in Sikeston and Kennett serving place-bound students in and near those rural communities.

Dr. Dobbins also served a two-year term as president of the Missouri Council on Public Higher Education, which is the organization for presidents and chancellors of Missouri's public colleges and universities. In addition, in 2007 he was selected to serve a three-year term on the American Association of State Colleges and Universities Board of Directors, an organization which represents over 420 U.S. public college and university presidents, which equates to 56 percent of the enrollment at all public four-year institutions.

I am extremely proud of all that Dr. Dobbins has done for Missouri's higher education system. It is my honor to recognize him before the U.S. House of Representatives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for roll call votes # 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, and 118 because I was attending the funeral of community leader and former United Auto Workers vice president General Holiefield in Detroit. Had I been present, I would have voted AYE on roll call votes # 113, 114, 115, and 118 and NAY on roll call #116 and #117.