

HONORING SONYA ROMERO

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to honor one of our exceptional teachers, Ms. Sonya Romero from Lew Wallace Elementary School in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Sonya Romero is a bilingual teacher who focuses on early childhood education. She is a candidate for National Board certification; she serves on the state's NMTEACH council; and was recently appointed Executive Vice President of the Albuquerque Teachers Federation.

A teacher for the past 20 years, Sonya has worked at Lew Wallace Elementary located in downtown Albuquerque for the last 10 years. The small student population is represented by a wide variety of cultures and languages. Three out of every four students qualifies for the National School Lunch Program. Many of the kids are from families that are homeless or rely on housing assistance; and they struggle with food insecurity.

The tightknit Downtown community is also home to everyday heroes who will do anything for students, colleagues and neighbors, including rallying around families in need; locating desperately needed services; packaging food in back packs for the weekend; inviting parents to have a free breakfast with their son or daughter; spending their own money on clothes, shoes or school supplies; and even inviting an illiterate mother to sit in during story time to help her learn to read.

Several months ago, some of her former students were placed in a dire family situation causing Child Protective Services to intervene with the intent of placing the two sisters with a foster family. Sonya and her teenage son made the decision to take the girls into their own home and they have been there since.

Sonya and Lew Wallace Elementary School were recently featured on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" and received \$20,000 from Target. Sonya is grateful that her story is shedding light on the roles that many teachers embrace for the benefit of their students. She considers her work and that of her fellow teachers very special and views this recognition as a community celebration. Sonya reminds us that most teachers are not just providing instruction, but are deeply committed to the overall well-being and success of their students. They overcome challenges, and create a secure and trusting environment for our children.

CANDICE CODR

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Candice Codr for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Candice Codr is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5-8 and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Candice Codr 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 Candice Codr for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

TRIBUTE TO JACK HAWKINS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Jack Hawkins attends Pearland High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The most important reason I believe Americans should be involved in the political process is because of the right we were given to vote for the leaders of our country. One reason I believe this is a crucial role of citizens is because with this right it allows us to vote into office the people who we believe will pursue and advocate effectively what we as citizens are needing from our city, state, and federal government. This right is one of the primary reasons our great nation was founded, so that people could live in a democracy and advocate to officials what they needed instead of having a monarchal (or more commonly today) a dictatorship classification of government speak for them. But more importantly, I believe citizens should exercise this right because we have thousands of soldiers stationed all over the world helping to both defend this right for our country, and try to help others achieve the type of democratic government that we possess and believe in so prominently. Therefore by exercising this right, it is a small way to show our appreciation and gratefulness for our troops by exercising this right that they are fighting for so valiantly.

The other important reason I believe Americans should be involved in the political process is because with the election of our nation's leaders it is has repeatedly proven by history that through former political leaders, specifically past American presidents, the United States has made substantial positive differences in both domestic and international affairs. For example with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt who transformed the country's economy. With the enacting of his New Deal policies Roosevelt was able to provide millions of Americans with jobs and economic security therefore helping America incredibly through the

Great Depression. Also America has made major strides in international affairs such as through President Obama who with the aid of America's top military leaders and the United States' Navy SEALs team was able to kill Osama bin Laden, the leader of the terrorist group Al-Qaeda who was responsible for horrific acts including most infamously the bombing of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. Although it has not stopped Al-Qaeda completely, President Obama along with his esteemed colleagues made American history and showed the strength of the United States as an international power. The United States is the by far the best country in the world and it is repeatedly shown through the election of our country's leaders who throughout history and in the future will continue to show America's greatness both domestically and internationally if the citizens of our magnificent country continue to take an active role in America's political process.

CONGRATULATING LEROY AND
OVIA MARIE MCGINNIS ON THEIR
65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**HON. JASON SMITH**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Leroy and Ovia Marie McGinnis on their 65th wedding anniversary. They were married on March 3, 1950 in a courthouse in Arkansas. Although they were young, their love for one another was unconditional. In fact, Leroy was so intent on marrying the love of his life that he spent the last four dollars to his name to pay for their modest ceremony. Worried of what their families might think, Leroy and Ovia Marie kept their marriage a secret for several weeks.

Soon after marrying, the young couple moved to Cuba, Missouri, where their love and affection for one another continued to grow. They have raised six children together, and Mr. McGinnis still serves as CEO of McGinnis Wood Products, a very successful business that he founded in 1968.

Again, I want to wish Mr. and Mrs. McGinnis a Happy Anniversary and many more years of joy!

HERMANTOWN FIFTH-GRADERS

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three very compassionate fifth-grade school children for their leadership in protecting us against the silent killer of carbon monoxide poisoning. The students who have stepped forward to meet an important community need are Bryanna Kliegle, Alexa Aagenes and Ani Jovanovich of Hermantown Middle School.

I don't think I have to remind anyone that winters in Minnesota can be very cold. We Minnesotans are hardy souls and deal with it. But with the cold temperatures, there is a silent killer that unfortunately creeps into our communities every year as people try to warm their homes. This killer is called carbon monoxide poisoning.

Bryanna had a friend who died from carbon monoxide poisoning just a few weeks before Christmas. She turned her grief into action, reaching out to two friends to help her so others would not be lost to this killer. They formed a group and went door-to-door raising donations to buy carbon monoxide detectors for local families. These detectors cost only about \$20.00 each, but within a short span they formed Hopes of Faith to handle the donations. To date, they have raised more than enough money to buy 200 detectors and then received 100 more from Safe Kids Minnesota and Kiddie, a company that makes the units.

Bryanna recently spoke at a school assembly and told her classmates, "We didn't think we could do this much at first. We're just fifth-graders. Regular fifth graders, but we reached out and wanted to take a chance."

How many times do we look around our communities and think something should be done and wait for others to lead the way? Bryanna, Alexa and Ani are exceptional young students we can look to as leaders. They saw a need, stepped forward and did something about it. I am so very proud of them.

HONORING LUCY COFFEY

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lucy Coffey, the oldest living female veteran who passed away last week after 108 vibrant years. Originally from Indiana, Ms. Coffey was working in a Dallas, Texas supermarket when she learned of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Putting country before self, Ms. Coffey quit her job and joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. She bravely served in the Pacific Theater during World War II, earning two bronze stars and ascending to the rank of sergeant.

For 13 years after her discharge in 1945, Ms. Coffey worked as an Army civilian in Okinawa, Japan. She ultimately settled in my hometown of San Antonio, where she worked in the procurement office at Kelly Air Force Base until her retirement in 1971.

Last year, Ms. Coffey visited the nation's capital on an Honor Flight. While in Washington, she not only visited the women's memorial at Arlington National Cemetery and the National World War II Memorial, she also met with both Vice President Biden and President Obama.

Ms. Coffey leaves behind an abundance of admirers who have sung her praises since her passing. President Obama cited Ms. Coffey's pioneering spirit and the inspiration she has provided generations of patriots since her service. Vice President Biden celebrated her legacy and said he was honored to have met her. Bexar County veterans service officer Queta Marquez highlighted Ms. Coffey's liveliness and spunk.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer Ms. Coffey's loved ones my sincere condolences for their loss and echo San Antonians' deep gratitude for her exemplary service and unwavering patriotism. She was a remarkable American who will be greatly missed.

HONORING COAST GUARD CAPTAIN ANDY BLOMME

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor a proud son of North Carolina, Captain Carlyle "Andy" Blomme, as he prepares to retire from the United States Coast Guard.

Captain Blomme has served as the Coast Guard Chief of Congressional Affairs since June 2012, where he has been an excellent representative of the Coast Guard here on Capitol Hill. Captain Blomme has worked diligently to ensure the Coast Guard has the resources and authorities necessary to not only keep our nation safe, but to be a steward of its natural resources. His deep knowledge of Coast Guard operations, acquisitions, and strategic priorities has been invaluable to the members who work closely with the Coast Guard, which I came to appreciate as Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee of Homeland Security. This has been especially true as we have worked to recapitalize the Coast Guard's aging fleet in a time of shrinking budgets.

There has been no better advocate for, or representative of, the Coast Guard than Captain Blomme and I am proud to have had the opportunity to work closely with Andy during this time. My staff and I have often relied on him and his staff's knowledge and understanding of the missions, challenges and responsibilities of the Coast Guard.

Captain Blomme comes from a distinguished family of seafarers from North Carolina. His great, great grandfather was First Mate on the SS *Ella* and *Annie*, a Blockade Running Steamship in the Civil War. *Ella* and *Annie* ran the Federal blockade on behalf of the Confederacy until November 1863, when she was captured by USS *Niphon* off New Inlet, North Carolina. Demonstrating his pride as the son, of the son, of a sailor, Captain Blomme came back to the same proud roots decades later as the Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Cutter *Diligence*, homeported in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Captain Blomme is a 1985 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. He has served at sea and ashore in a variety of operational and staff tours throughout his distinguished career, including serving in Command of Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville, as well as Coast Guard Cutters *Diligence*, *Nantucket*, and *Point Huron*. He also rounded out his nearly twelve years of sea duty with tours aboard Coast Guard Cutters *Gallatin* and *Chase*. Aside from an impressive record of sea service, Andy has also served ashore as a controller in the Coast Guard's Fifth District Command Center in Portsmouth, VA, as the Operations Officer at Coast Guard Group Miami and as Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security during the tenures of Secretaries Michael Chertoff and Janet Napolitano.

This week, Captain Blomme will depart his post on Capitol Hill and retire after 30 years of honorable service. During that time, he has embodied the spirit of the Coast Guard and its motto, *Semper Paratus, Always Ready*. We thank him and his family for his service to the

United States Congress and to the country. On behalf of the House of Representatives, we wish Captain Blomme, his wife Peg, and their two sons, Matthew and Alex, the best in their future endeavors. We congratulate Captain Andy Blomme on his retirement and wish him fair winds and following seas.

PLATTE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Platte Valley Medical Center for receiving the 2014 Commerce City Business on the Move Award.

The Business on the Move Award recognizes businesses bringing new employment, growth in sales or new capital investment to the city in the last year. The Platte Valley Medical Center built their first off-site medical office building in the Reunion Marketplace area expanding their service to northern Commerce City. This provides critical service from medical providers to a community that has had limited access at this new location while ensuring access to quality care and support to the community.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Platte Valley Medical Center for this well-deserved recognition by Commerce City.

HONORING CONOR DEVLIN

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Conor Devlin attends Tompkins High School in Katy, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

Our government has evolved far beyond its original parameters. It now regulates entire economic industries, healthcare, going so far as to regulate the types of things we can and cannot buy. Our government has left its original designation as a *Laissez-Faire* Democratic Republic to a borderline Socialist country like the rest of the European and the EU. Our government is an overgrown bureaucracy that costs us—the American people—trillions each year, and yet it fails to accomplish its task when its people are spiraling into debt and unemployment is skyrocketing. The job of the American government is to protect its citizens with an up to date military comprised of the most advanced arsenal. Secondly, the government