

IN RECOGNITION OF CHABOT COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

**HON. ERIC SWALWELL**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and congratulate the Chabot College women's basketball team on a remarkable championship run that ended with the Gladiators bringing home the first place trophy for the California Community College Athletic Association women's state basketball championship.

On Sunday, March 22, the Gladiators of Chabot gave Mt. San Antonio College their first loss of the year in the championship game. This was the Gladiator's first state championship, but we know that it will not be their last. Prior to this year, Mt. San Antonio had won six of the last ten state championships.

I am proud of the Gladiators for bringing the trophy home to Hayward and Northern California. Since 1998 only one other Northern Californian team has won the championship.

The Gladiators showed grit, determination, and focus in their narrow victory over a tough Mt. San Antonio team. A late three pointer put the Gladiators on top and free throws down the stretch sealed the deal.

Head Coach Mark Anger and his staff have led a truly exemplary group of student athletes for the entirety of the season, finishing with 31 wins and only four losses, and clinching Chabot College's first Coast Conference North Championship in 13 years.

I want to give special recognition to stand out players Morgan Green, who received the State Player of the Year, the MVP Final Four, and the MVP Coast Conference North awards; Alana Simon, who was first team All State, All Tournament Final Four, and fist team All Conference; and Michelle Townsend, who was third team All State, All Tournament Final Four, and first team All Conference.

I wish the best of luck to all of the players and coaching staff of the Chabot College Gladiators.

Go Gladiators!

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. BETO O'ROURKE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, during the rollcall votes on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, I was absent after returning to El Paso to meet with representatives from the U.S. Army who are conducting the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA). The SPEA is a formal review of our country's military installations in preparation for a reduction in force that will take the Army from 470,000 active duty soldiers to 420,000 by the end of the decade.

Had I been present, on rollcall number 136, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 137, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 138, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 139, I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall number 140, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 141, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall number 142, I would have voted "no."

**HONORING TRINNIE 'PITO PITO' BACA**

**HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to honor Trinnie 'Pito Pito' Baca, a living institution and tireless community leader in Belen, New Mexico.

When Pito Pito was three or four years old, he was unexpectedly bitten by thousands of red ants, resulting in convulsions and long-standing health complications. His family has lovingly cared for him ever since, and Pito Pito has shared his own love and compassion with friends and neighbors in Belen for more than 60 years.

In 2013, the City of Belen officially designated December 16 "Trinnie Baca Day" and Pito Pito received a key to the city in recognition of his lasting contributions. Residents will tell you that no gesture is too small for Pito Pito to demonstrate his heartfelt appreciation for his beloved community.

Famously known for dropping by local businesses to help sweep the entrance, shaking a stranger's hand, enthusiastically signaling motorists to honk their horns, and attending community events and funerals, Pito Pito's presence is felt in the community. He can always be found with a helping hand and guiding heart. Through his acts of love and kindness, Pito Pito demonstrates the profound impact one individual can have on an entire community.

I join family, friends, and everyone who has met Pito Pito in celebrating his birthday. Our state is richer and fuller because Pito Pito teaches and reminds us to love more, to be selfless, and to always remember that it is the people around us who make life worth living.

**HONORING MADISON BRASUELL**

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 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.

Madison Brasuell attends Foster High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The role that our government should play in our lives is a question being prodded back and forth between Congressmen and women since the creation of our nation. The answer is subjective, of course, because it is impossible to make 320 million people happy with the system by which our government is ran. The efficacy of our current system, however, is questionable at times and I believe that the government should play a minuet role in our lives.

I should start by noting that we are lucky to live in a country that gives us so much freedom in our daily lives. We are given, in my opinion, the most important facet anyone could ask for: the freedom of speech. With this amendment, we have the liberty to tell our government how we really feel and not fear the consequences for voicing our expressions. Though more often than not our government hears our desires and doesn't do anything about it. They promise to minimally interfere with our lives but then set new regulations on sectors that directly impact our lives and wind up hurting us in the end. It is unacceptable for a government to not genuinely care for its people.

I would ideally choose to live in an environment where there is a strong state government with little national government intervention. The national government's only job should be to provide a system defense, build and maintain highway systems and infrastructure, provide police enforcement, and keep peaceful trade facilitated with other countries. I feel that the government should have no control on our healthcare system, other than impose strict regulations, such as the certification of medical professionals and sanitation laws. I also believe that the government has no business interfering with our money except the protection against monopolies and the strict investment regulations. Other than that, I would say making the national government stronger would be detrimental to our nation.

My utopian government has flaws, as does every plan, but many Americans would agree on making the national government weaker. This would give Americans more freedom of choice because they would have more control over their lives and not have a "government shadow" tracking their every move. By having a government focus primarily on its safety of their people, they can focus less on trying to satisfy each individual and more on satisfying the nation as a whole.

**225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATENT ACT**

**HON. BOB GOODLATTE**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, on April 10, 2015 the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office will recognize the 225th anniversary of the first U.S. Patent Act.

When President Washington signed the bill that laid the foundation for our patent system, even he could not have foreseen the revolution in technology that was yet to come. During these past two centuries America has been at the forefront of innovation, from the industrial revolution to the telegraph and telephone, to modern computers and the Internet, to a whole new era of mobile computing and personal devices.

American inventors have led the world for centuries in new innovations, from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison to the Wright brothers and Henry Ford. But if we want to continue as leaders in the global economy, we must continue to encourage the innovators of today to develop the technologies of tomorrow.

The fuel that powers the innovative engine that is America is its people. But the rules of the road require regular adjustment, and during the last two hundred years we have seen our patent laws updated and modernized. The most significant reforms took place in 1836, 1952 and most recently in 2011 with the America Invents Act.

Currently, we are continuing these efforts by addressing specific issues concerning abusive patent litigation with the Innovation Act (H.R. 9). This bill puts forward reasonable policies that allow for more transparency and brings fundamental fairness into the patent system and the courts. This bill holds true to the Constitution, our Founders and our promise to future generations that America will continue to lead the world as a fountain for discovery, innovation and economic growth.

So, on this 225th anniversary of the first U.S. Patent Act, America continues to be committed to lead the world in innovation and creativity.

#### INTRODUCTION OF PRIVATE STUDENT LOAN BANKRUPTCY FAIRNESS ACT

##### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act, a bill I introduced earlier today with my colleagues DANNY DAVIS and ERIC SWALWELL which would restore fairness in student lending by treating privately issued student loans in bankruptcy the same as other types of private debt.

It is sad enough that our children are increasingly burdened by a crushing weight of student debt. But the fact that students under the weight of this debt are treated so unfairly in bankruptcy is unconscionable.

Before 2005, private student loans issued by for-profit lenders were treated in bankruptcy like most other unsecured consumer debt, such as credit card debt. Our bill will ensure that privately issued student loans will once again be treated like other consumer debt and be dischargeable in bankruptcy.

Private student loans have much in common with credit cards and subprime mortgages. For example, private student loans often have onerous interest rates with no caps and can include exorbitant fees and hidden charges. In addition, many lenders have used aggressive marketing and high-pressure sales tactics to target particularly vulnerable people, namely, young men and women without financial experience, and older Americans seeking to restart their careers in these financially difficult times by pursuing higher education and training.

The harmful features of many private student loans have resulted in a substantial rise in the number of delinquencies.

To make matters worse, private student loans lack the critical consumer protections that come with federal student loans. For instance, private lenders are not required to—and typically do not—provide any of the deferments, income-based repayment plans, cancellation rights, or loan forgiveness programs that are available to federal student loan borrowers.

A hallmark of our Nation's bankruptcy law is to give an honest but unfortunate debtor a chance to obtain meaningful relief. To that end, the law exempts very few types of debt from elimination through the bankruptcy process, and only for principled policy reasons, such as debts for child support, taxes, criminal fines and intentional injury.

Ten years ago, however, Congress changed the bankruptcy law without any substantive analysis so that student loans made by private, for-profit lenders became very difficult to discharge in bankruptcy.

Currently, the Bankruptcy Code prohibits the discharge of private educational debt unless the debtor, in addition to meeting the already stringent requirements for personal bankruptcy, proves that repayment would impose an, "undue hardship," on the debtor and the debtor's dependents. In practice, however, it's hard for a debtor to ever successfully meet this standard.

The current bankruptcy law unjustly punishes hardworking Americans who are simply trying to improve their lives by pursuing a higher education and became victims of predatory private student loan lenders.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau warns that private student loan debt currently exceeds \$150 billion, which could undermine the future prospects of millions of Americans.

We can do better.

I urge my colleagues to support the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act.

#### A TRIBUTE TO GUNNAR OLSON

##### HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Gunnar Olson for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Gunnar has the determination and drive to be successful in all that he does and his exemplary work with the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is a testament to that. As Communications Manager, he utilizes his abilities to create a story with accuracy and interest to achieve the goals of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Orga-

nization. In his free time Gunnar likes to dedicate his time to serving others. He volunteers on the Water Works Foundation board and is working to revitalize the Water Works Park. In all aspects of his life, Gunnar's example of hard work and service is what makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Gunnar in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Gunnar on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE SAFETY, EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS THROUGH PUBLIC INSPECTION ACT OF 2015

##### HON. DONNA F. EDWARDS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, historically on transportation projects, the construction inspector is the eyes, ears, and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements, and that the materials used will stand the test of time. In short, they are there to ensure that the motoring public gets what they pay for, and that public safety and the public interest are protected.

Outsourcing public inspection functions on State and local surface transportation projects eliminates a representative of the public from the construction site and puts a private company in charge of inspecting the work of the private construction company. This can create potential conflicts of interest. Unfortunately, across the nation, some departments of transportation are outsourcing public inspection with poor results.

That is why I am introducing today the Safety, Efficiency, and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act to require public employees to perform the inspection and related essential public functions on all state and local transportation projects. This bill is intended to ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted, and projects are delivered in a timely manner.

#### HONORING MS. PAM CHATMAN

##### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 26, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Ms. Pam Chatman.

For as long as Pam Chatman can remember, she's been coming in first. She was the first of 3 children born to parents in the heart of the poverty-stricken Mississippi Delta. She