

skills along with discussing the ideas of individual freedom, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and traditional values. It is extremely important for young people in the United States to learn about the virtues of these ideas.

I join with the students' families and friends in wishing these young conservative leaders a successful conference, and excellent time in our nation's capital.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF ANTHONY "TONY" GIANNETTA

##### HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Anthony Dominic "Tony" Giannetta, who passed away on May 30, 2015, at the age of 94. As the founder of Hallmark Homes, Tony helped expand the California home building industry and devoted much of his life to maintaining it. His kind heart, talent, and contributions to the Central Valley will be greatly missed.

Tony was born on November 7, 1920, in Fresno, California. Raised in Fresno, Tony graduated from Edison High School. He married Alice Therese Baraldi on November 22, 1942, and shortly thereafter the two moved to Marysville, CA, to fulfill Tony's duties in the United States Army. After the war the couple moved back to Fresno, where they settled and raised six sons.

During the late 1940's, Tony began his career in the home building industry as a carpenter. In 1951 Tony and John Mortillaro formed the Quality Homes Construction Company, which merged with the Cetti Brothers Construction Company a year later. Under the Hallmark Homes name, the company developed 27 subdivisions and built more than 4,500 homes in the Fresno, Clovis, and Madera areas, in addition to the construction of many commercial projects. This made Hallmark Homes one of the largest regional builders for three decades, and it marked the association of the name Tony Giannetta within the home building industry. In fact, the two became synonymous in Fresno.

Tony was a member of the Building Industry Association of the San Joaquin Valley, and served as president in 1967, 1979, and 1980. He acted as a Director to the California Building Industry Association and was a life director to the National Association of Homebuilders who on February 15, 2008 acknowledged him as a 50 year member, and he served on various committees for the California Building Industry Association including its Legislative Committee, Executive Committee, Insurance Committee, and Long Range Planning Committee.

As a Fresno native, maintaining community involvement was important to Tony. In partnership with the Construction Department at Fresno City College, Tony provided work experience training for students in the building industry. He was also instrumental in creating the National Association of Home Builders-Building Industry Association student chapters at Fresno City College and California State University, Fresno.

For his contributions to homebuilding and its community, Tony became a lifetime member

of the Building Industry Association of the San Joaquin Valley in 1986 and was inducted into the California Housing Foundation Hall of Fame in 1988—the first inductee to come from the Central Valley. He was also awarded the Oscar Spano Lifetime Service Award in 1988 by his local building industry association.

In his spare time, Tony enjoyed traveling, playing sports and cherished his time with family and friends. He was a devoted husband to Alice, his bride of 72 years; a loving father to his sons, Gerald, Ronald, Anthony Jr., James, Michael and John; and the kind and generous grandfather of 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Tony's favorite memories included celebrating the holidays in his home as well as gathering for Sunday pasta lunches, a tradition he shared with his family.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the life of Anthony Dominic "Tony" Giannetta, a Central Valley pioneer and influential figure in the California home building industry.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

##### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 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 \$18,152,758,342,047.24. We've added \$7,525,881,293,134.16 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.

#### RECOGNIZING THE OPENING OF THE RICHARD AND GINA SANTORI LIBRARY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

##### HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2015

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the opening of the Richard and Gina Santori Library of Aurora, Illinois.

Since its founding in 1838, the Aurora Public Library system has nurtured education in our diverse community and has instilled a love of reading for generations of Aurorans. By establishing locations throughout the city, developing bookmobiles and robust outreach efforts, the library has made educational resources accessible to all Aurorans and been a strong contributor to community growth.

With the opening of the new library in downtown Aurora, the Aurora Public Library has embraced the challenges and opportunities of the next century. The building will feature a "Makers Space" on the first floor with a 3D printer, laser cutter, vinyl cutter, plotter printer, computers with CAD, CAM, Adobe Cloud and other creation software for students and community members to experiment and train with modern manufacturing tools. It will also feature

an audio/visual library, the Kiwanis Club of Aurora Children's Library, and a Teen Space with a state-of-the-art media studio. These new resources will allow the Aurora Public Library to continue its mission and serve the new needs of our community.

Congratulations to the City of Aurora and the Aurora Public Library on the opening of the new facility. The Richard and Gina Santori Library will no doubt inspire future generations to become lifelong learners.

#### THE FUTURE OF U.S.-ZIMBABWE RELATIONS

##### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Zimbabwe is a country the size of the state of Montana, with a population of nearly 14 million people. However, its mineral wealth gives it an outsized importance. The southern African nation is the world's third largest source of platinum group metals and has significant reserves of nickel, gold, chromium and dozens of other metals and minerals. Significant diamond reserves were discovered in 2006. Currently, about 40 percent of the country's foreign exchange is earned from the export of these metals and minerals.

It was the abundance of such mineral resources, and their exploitation, which has driven the relationship between the West and Zimbabwe. Since its colonization by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company in 1889 on behalf of Great Britain, the area once known as Southern Rhodesia has experienced a tumultuous history. The white minority gained self-governance in 1922, and a 1930 Land Apportionment Act restricted black access to land, making many Africans laborers and not land owners. In 1964, the white minority government unsuccessfully sought independence from Great Britain, and then unilaterally declared independence a year later under white rule. This move sparked international outrage and economic sanctions, and that regime was never widely recognized by the international community, though the support of white-ruled South Africa enabled the government to limp along.

Meanwhile, black opposition to minority rule, which began in the 1930s, erupted into a guerrilla war in 1972. Attempts to end the conflict diplomatically failed until the 1979 talks brokered by Great Britain resulted in British-supervised independence elections. The winner of those elections was Robert Mugabe, leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union, or ZANU, who at age 91 continues to rule this country, in large part through intimidation and manipulation of elections.

As a hero of the independence and majority rule movements, Mugabe has enjoyed the support of many other African leaders, who have considered him an honored elder and have generally declined to join in international efforts to sanction his government. This has placed the United States in an awkward position, with limited African support for political and economic reforms in Zimbabwe.

Although many observers have credited the Mugabe government with productive management until fairly recent years, there were political problems from the beginning of his rule.

For example, Mugabe fired fellow independence leader Joshua Nkomo in 1982 and then launched a campaign to suppress what his government called a rebellion by pro-Nkomo forces. The Mugabe regime has been accused of killing thousands of ethnic Ndebele citizens over the next few years to end the supposed rebellion, assisted by military advisors from East Germany and North Korea.

Once one of the leading industrial nations in Africa, Zimbabwe began a long economic downward spiral in the late 1990s. Squatters, with the support of the Zimbabwe government, seized white farms they claimed had been stolen by white settlers in the past. Despite government assurances, these farms were not transferred to black farm workers, but rather to cronies of the Mugabe government who lacked agricultural experience. Both whites and blacks in Zimbabwe acknowledged that the land policies had been unfair, but the manner of addressing this problem led to serious economic problems for the country.

Agricultural production fell, and the manufacturing sector, heavily tied to agriculture, also diminished. Efforts to squeeze currency for shrinking national reserves from businesses, coupled with the disastrous requirement that businesses use the fictitious exchange rate, caused retailers to lose money with each sale. The effort to close the many vendors who supplied tourists with souvenirs

and citizens with necessary household items was yet another milestone in Zimbabwe's economic collapse. By 2006, year-on-year inflation exceeded 1,000 percent. Devaluation of the currency and the subsequent use of foreign currency are credited with eventually preventing a complete economic collapse.

Zimbabwe and the United States have had a tempestuous relationship since that southern African country emerged from white minority rule. Part of the problem has been resentment by Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe and his closest advisers against the United States for not supporting their liberation movement, the backdrop to which was the geopolitical conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. Another part of the problem has been the justifiable public criticism of repressive political policies by the Mugabe government by successive U.S. administrations. Consequently, the minimal communications between our two governments has contributed to suspicions and an inability for U.S. officials to reach out to cooperative Zimbabwe officials.

Successive elections have been the subject of opposition and international criticism for the lack of political space allowed to those who would challenge the ruling ZANU party. Arrests, incarcerations, torture in custody, beatings at public rallies and demonstrations and disappearances of government opponents have denied legitimacy to the Zimbabwe elec-

tion processes. The country's commitment to democratic governance has been further placed in question due to a series of repressive laws preventing freedoms of speech, association and movement.

As if the government's repressive tactics are not troubling enough, political jockeying in Zimbabwe, including the recent dismissal of Vice President Joice Mujuru, places the succession to President Mugabe in doubt, which puts U.S. policy in question. Last week's hearing examined current U.S. policy toward Zimbabwe and the prospects for an enhanced relationship depending on events that have not yet taken place.

Of course, in foreign policy, one cannot wait until a crisis materializes in order to create a planned response. A leader nearing the century mark, presiding over a fractious political scene in a country that has experienced political and economic turmoil creates a situation in which planning for a positive outcome to regime change must be devised.

Zimbabwe is a country rich in both natural and human potential. Once the resentments of the current old guard have passed and democratic governance can be established, U.S.-Zimbabwe relations can become what they have never been: harmonious and mutually beneficial.