

small business. Congress must do more to protect these vital job creators from excessive taxes and regulations.

I am grateful to the National Federation of Independent Business, NFIB, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, encouraged by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, led by Ted Pitts, as well as local Chambers of Blythewood, Chapin, Greater Columbia, Greater Irmo, Cayce-West Columbia, Lake Murray, Lexington, Batesburg-Leesville, Greater Aiken, Barnwell, Orangeburg, Midland Valley, and North Augusta, for their support of small business across the Second District of South Carolina.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

VETERANS PROOF OF SERVICE RECORDS SHOULD BE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Defense transfers a veteran's service record to the National Archives 62 years after they are discharged from the military.

100,000 archived records per year are requested—to determine eligibility for a medal, to research one's medical history, or to request a change in discharge status.

The Department of Defense provides records to veterans for free, but once the records are sent to the Archives, veterans are charged \$25 to \$75 for a copy of their file.

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable that a veteran should have to pay the government for proof of their sacrifice and service. What is more, this fee is levied on veterans who are most likely living on a fixed income.

This fee is unnecessary and inexcusable, and I ask my colleagues to support legislation that I am introducing today to eliminate it.

REMEMBERING EZRA SCHWARTZ

(Mrs. WALORSKI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I rise today to honor and remember 18-year-old Ezra Schwartz, a Massachusetts teenager whose life was tragically taken in Israel last month. Ezra was spending his gap year studying at a yeshiva in Israel and was one of the three people shot and killed last week by a Palestinian terrorist.

The continued violent attacks targeting Israeli civilians are, without qualification or exception, acts of terror and deserve full condemnation. Attacks on innocent civilians, whether they are American, Israeli, or Palestinian, have zero justification, and our

response to such terrorism cannot be silence.

My heart and prayers go out to the friends and family of Ezra, and we honor those whose lives have been lost by such hateful actions.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in remembering the young life of Ezra Schwartz.

THE RECENT ATTACK IN COLORADO SPRINGS

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs became the target of the 351st mass shooting in the United States this year.

Three people were killed: an Iraq war veteran, a mother of two, and a local police officer. They are now among the more than 12,000 Americans who have died in gun-related incidents since the start of the year.

The shooter in Colorado Springs is reported to have used a semiautomatic, AK-47-style firearm, an assault weapon that has its origins in Stalin's Soviet Army.

This firearm and others like it are weapons of war, not tools for self-defense. They serve no purpose other than to kill. And we can no longer permit the proliferation of and easy access to these weapons in the United States.

That is why, in the coming weeks, I will be introducing legislation that reauthorizes the Assault Weapons Ban. During the 10 years this ban was in effect, localities reported as much as a 72-percent decline in gun crimes involving assault weapons.

Today, 59 percent of American voters support a ban on the purchase of semiautomatic and assault weapons. The only thing that stands in the way is Congress' failure to act. The time for action is now.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN J. PIAZZA, SR., FOUNDER, ARMED FORCES MILITARY MUSEUM

(Mr. JOLLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize a Floridian who has spent the last two decades making sure our veterans and their heroic acts are never forgotten.

I rise today to commend John J. Piazza, Sr., the founder and president of the Armed Forces Military Museum in Largo, Florida.

A veteran himself, Mr. Piazza served from 1955 to 1960 in the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Reserve.

In 1998, he founded the Armed Forces Military Museum, exhibiting a personal collection assembled into a mobile museum, with heavy equipment displayed at schools, community events, and the Florida State Fair.

But, in 2008, he was able to fulfill his dream of opening a permanent home for great military memorabilia, vehicles, and equipment, both his own and those donated by those who have served.

Mr. Speaker, today, Mr. Piazza celebrates his birthday, and I urge my colleagues to not only join me in sending him very best wishes but to thank John for his lifelong dedication to honoring the American heroes who have served our Nation and for helping educate the young men and women who today have the opportunity to learn about valor and sacrifice and our Armed Forces in Largo, Florida.

THE DISPLACED JOBS RELIEF ACT OF 2015

(Mr. AGUILAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Displaced Jobs Relief Act of 2015, a bill I introduced yesterday to help small businesses that have been hurt by foreign competition.

As the Inland Empire of California fights back from the Great Recession, we need to make sure that we use every tool available to help our small businesses recover.

Small businesses were dealt heavy blows in the past decade, both from our weakened economy and from our flawed trade agreements. International trade plays an important role in our economy, but history has taught us that not all agreements are fair. Sometimes they take a toll on local businesses that don't have the ability to handle unfair foreign competition.

That is why I introduced this bill. Trade Adjustment Assistance has played a crucial role in retraining and placing Americans in good-paying jobs for generations. If we increase the availability of funds, we can help protect hardworking Americans from losing business to unfair competition overseas.

My bill would increase the authorization for TAA for businesses up to \$50 million for each fiscal year, beginning in 2016 and running through 2021.

Historically, these programs have always authorized \$50 million a year, and, in fiscal year 2011, House Republicans cut the levels to \$16 million, barely 30 percent of what funding was.

This is an important program that can help businesses in the Inland Empire and across the Nation, and I urge my colleagues to support me and the Displaced Jobs Relief Act for 2015 for the sake of American workers and businesses.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SHERIFF AL ST. LAWRENCE

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Chatham County Sheriff Al St. Lawrence.

Last Tuesday, Sheriff St. Lawrence died after a long fight with cancer. He was 81 years old. He was a dedicated law enforcement professional for Chatham County for over 50 years, 23 of those years spent as sheriff.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, he joined the Chatham County Police Department in 1959, after leaving the service. He was appointed to the State Peace Officers Standards and Training Council twice. He was named Police Chief of the Year three times during his tenure.

In 1992, he ran for sheriff and won, being reelected five times. In his 20 years as sheriff, he oversaw numerous changes to the department, including the construction of a new jail.

He was a gentleman, a professional, and a mentor. He was a man of few words and believed in personal responsibility. He loved the Sheriff's Department, and he loved the people that worked there.

I commend Sheriff Al St. Lawrence for years of service to his country and to the Chatham County Sheriff Department. We should all strive to achieve the success and admiration that Sheriff St. Lawrence achieved through his years of service.

INJUSTICE FOR LAQUAN MCDONALD

(Mr. FOSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, we have seen an uproar over the death of Laquan McDonald, and rightfully so. But, sadly, the injustice for Laquan goes much deeper.

Laquan McDonald suffered more tragedy in his short life than anyone should have to bear. As a child, Laquan was abused at home. He was then handed over to the Department of Children and Family Services, where he was sexually molested, not just once but in two different foster homes.

At 17 years old, Laquan was shot 16 times by an on-duty police officer. Even after death, the injustice continued. It took 400 days before the officer who shot Laquan faced charges.

We should all be ashamed at how our society failed Laquan McDonald.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that Black lives matter, that Laquan McDonald's life matters, and justice matters. We should all be working to ensure that Laquan gets the justice that he has been denied for so long and to end the cycle of poverty, abuse, and injustice that shaped his life.

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MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

(Ms. STEFANIK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue to lead the fight to

repeal the medical device tax. This is a tax on revenue rather than profit. It leads to some of the highest corporate tax rates in the world and creates undue harm to an industry that not only creates jobs, but also improves our health and well-being.

A company located in my district, NuMed, employs over 80 people and produces stents and other vascular equipment. The medical device tax prevents NuMed from increasing their budget on research and development by 15 percent.

AngioDynamics, another company in my district, employs 950 people and creates more than 100 different medical devices, including the AngioVac System used to treat blood clots. Recently, one of their executives said, "The \$1 million that AngioDynamics pays in Federal excise taxes on medical device company revenues could instead be used to employ another 10 to 15 people."

We must repeal this burdensome tax to help create jobs and improve patient outcomes.

THE FEDERAL BUDGET

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, the bipartisan budget agreement signed into law last month helped to avert another manufactured political crisis here in Washington. But our work is not done. If we don't pass a spending bill before December 11, working Americans and seniors will face another dangerous government shutdown.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, Republican leadership continues to threaten this process over radical policy riders like defunding Planned Parenthood. Unfortunately, in his first press conference, the new Speaker could not rule out another Republican government shutdown.

As we face tremendous threats to our national security, we need to set politics aside. Some things in this House have to be exempt from political gamesmanship, and we would certainly think that keeping government open and functioning would be one of the things that we take out of the political conversation.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want us to do our job. Our job is to make sure that this government runs, and we can't do that if we continue to use politics and the threat of a government shutdown to achieve what can't be achieved through the normal legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do our job.

HONORING JIM HOFFMAN OF WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

(Mr. KATKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Wayne County,

New York's most dedicated public servants, Jim Hoffman, and to send him off on a well-deserved retirement.

Jim's esteemed career in public service began when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a young man. It continued with his 30 years with the New York State Police, five terms serving as town supervisor in Williamson and 10 years as chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors.

Jim has faithfully served the constituents in the Town of Williamson and all of Wayne County. Under his leadership, Wayne County is certainly a better place to live. He has lowered taxes in Williamson, kept taxes stable across the county, supported our region's vast community of growers and farmers, emerged as a leader in the fight against Plan 2014, and made the Town of Williamson the first in all of New York State to function 100 percent on solar power.

There is no question that Jim's lifetime of service deserves recognition. He has been a great friend, mentor, and confidant throughout my time representing the people of the 24th Congressional District in the House of Representatives. I am so very appreciative for all that he has done for me and for our community.

Jim, congratulations to you on a long and distinguished career. Enjoy your retirement with your children and grandchildren. God bless you.

THE AFGHANISTAN CODEL

(Ms. KUSTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to discuss our country's ongoing efforts in Afghanistan.

Over Thanksgiving, I had the honor to join five of our other colleagues from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for a trip to spend the holiday with our outstanding service men and women in Kabul, Kandahar, and Bagram Air Force base.

Additionally, we received numerous briefings from senior military, State Department, and intelligence officials. We heard about the multitude of challenges facing the young democracy in Afghanistan, ranging from hard security challenges emanating from the Taliban, al Qaeda, and even ISIL, to societal challenges in a country with 92 percent illiteracy.

This is now primarily an Afghan fight with just over 9,800 American troops remaining in the country. However, the threat of international terrorism and the need to ensure that the country never again becomes a haven for those seeking to target the United States means that we will need to have a presence in Afghanistan for some time to come.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged by the dedication of the men and women in uniform who continue to demonstrate their commitment to our mission. I was also encouraged by the resolve