

and your families—thank you for honoring our country, all of us with your bravery and service.

[Applause]

"It is a joy to be with the family members, as my colleagues and others have said, Jack's daughter, our ship sponsor, Donna, his sons John and Pat, grandchildren, nephews and nieces and others.

"I send the congratulations and thanks of my colleagues in Congress to Joyce—Joyce, the love of Jack's life. She and Jack were both so proud of having this ship named in his honor but Admiral Joyce was very proud to comment that the ship that she christened, the USS Bonhomme Richard, was a bigger ship. Not a competition, though.

"Service runs deep in Jack Murtha's family from his brothers, Kit and Jim, to his nephews Brian and Bob—all proud Marines—and his grandson, Lieutenant Jack Murtha in the Air Force, and to Jack's wife, Captain Amanda Murtha.

"Today, as you commission, as we all commission, the USS John P. Murtha, I want to tell you a little bit about the man your ship is named for—his legacy of strength, effectiveness and fidelity. As was mentioned by my colleague, as a child, John's grandmother told him: 'You are put on this earth to make a difference.' And that's exactly what he did. John P. Murtha dedicated his entire life to the service of our nation.

"Jack Murtha was a fiercely proud Marine, who volunteered for combat in Vietnam—earning two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. In the end, Congressman Murtha would leave the Corps with 37 years of service to his name. How proud he was of that.

"In the Congress, Chairman Murtha was a formidable legislator and a towering leader. To watch Jack Murtha legislate was to observe a master at work. But more indicative of his character was to watch him communicate, with our troops in theater, at the Pentagon, and in their hospital rooms.

"His experiences in the battlefield of Vietnam was what fueled his boundless dedication to our men and women in uniform—with that connection to those warriors he frequently visited in Washington, across the country and around the world.

"A few of us had the privilege of traveling in bipartisan delegations with Jack—and this one in particular to Kuwait, a few weeks before the initiation of hostilities into Iraq—we observed the level of detail with which Jack conversed with the soldiers, whether it was the comfort of the seats in their Humvees—how much they could endure as they did their jobs—responding to their needs, providing body and vehicle armor and reliable radios—you name it. Again, not just the big picture, but down to the personal comfort and safety of our troops.

"In those moments, Jack bonded with them, sharing his own personal military experiences, and caring for them really as a father—as Secretary Murtha said, he treated them as family. And they returned his respect.

"We often saw this when he would take groups of us—as Bob mentioned—take groups of us on regular visits to our wounded warriors in the hospitals. One day as we were going into one of the rooms and the nurse came and said, 'Hold up. Hold up for a while.' We wanted to be very respectful and sensitive to the privacy of the soldiers. But when we walked in to the room, we saw a young, injured soldier standing at attention by his bed and saluting Jack Murtha wearing a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey right after they had won the Super Bowl.

[Applause]

"That was football but it was very personal with Jack.

"It is important to note that Jack defined our nation's strength, not only in our mili-

tary might—as important as our military is and the priority that it is—but also our strength is measured by Jack in the health and well being of the American people.

"Chairman Murtha fought for the armed forces—whether it was for what they needed, for our troops, facilities—but he also fought to advance scientific research to seek treatments and cures for breast cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS—the list goes on and on. Today, at Walter Reed, the John P. Murtha Cancer Center carries forward his commitment to the health of our entire community.

"John Murtha made a difference—for our national defense, for our nation's health, for the men and women who wear our nation's uniform.

"Commander Parker, as this fine ship comes alive with her outstanding crew, the strength of the USS John P. Murtha will embody our nation's promise to stand with you and your crew—through the storm and the calm, both as you defend democracy abroad, and when you come home safely. And when our men and women in uniform come home, Jack wanted them to feel safe as well.

"In the military, he always told us: on the battlefield, we leave no soldier behind. And when they come home, we leave no veteran behind. So I join all of those saluting our veterans who are here today. That was a priority for Jack Murtha.

[Applause]

"Semper Fi' was the watchword of Jack Murtha's life. And always faithful he was: to his principles, to his promises, to his family and to the nation he loved.

"As we place the Murtha into active service, we also renew our pledge to also always be faithful to you—the sailors and Marines who will board her today, and to every crew who follows.

"Like John P. Murtha, each of you has stepped forward and answered the call to 'make a difference'—for our country, and for the world. Be proud of the legacy that has been passed down to you, be proud of your ship's namesake and motto, and be proud of the values you share.

"May God bless the USS John P. Murtha.

"May God bless the brave men and women who will serve aboard it—and the privilege of serving as the first crew for one of these great ships, who will be transported within it—and the families who wait for their safe return. You are family to all of us. You will always be in our prayers.

"May God bless you and may God bless the United States of America."

HONORING BOB STAUF

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, as a former school teacher, I know just how dedicated our educators are to their students as well as the community as a whole. In the Bronx and Westchester, no one has displayed that dedication more than Bob Stauf, one of the honorees at this year's American Irish Association of Westchester Annual Dinner.

Involved in the world of education for a half century, Bob Stauf has taught elementary and junior high students at St. Philip Neri School in the Bronx, in the Yonkers Public School system and Yonkers and Tarrytown Salvation Army citadels. His work with the Salvation Army has also extended to its Advisory Board,

on which he currently serves as President for the Yonkers chapter. Bob is also the President of the 3rd Precinct Police Community Council, Vice President of the American Irish of Westchester, and facilitator of programming of Brahma Kumaris in Westchester. He has also taught adult education and home school instruction with the Yonkers School System and the Children's Village Yonkers Satellite program.

Bob has also made a difference at the local level through his work in City government. He has chaired the Yonkers Human Rights Commission under two administrations, chaired the Mayors Community Relations Committee and Mayor's Committee on Irish Affairs, chaired the Yonkers Community Action Program and was Vice Chair of New York State Community Agencies.

In addition, Bob is a good friend who was personally helpful to me just prior to my first trip as a Member of Congress to Ireland. He was a wonderful resource on Irish matters, and even traveled with me on that trip.

This year the American Irish Association of Westchester is honoring Bob Stauf at their Annual Dinner Dance. I want to congratulate Bob on this well-deserved honor and thank him for his many contributions to both the Bronx and Yonkers communities.

CELEBRATING KAZAKHSTAN'S 25 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, on December 16th the people of Kazakhstan will celebrate 25 years of their independence. From the collapse of the Soviet Union to the present day, Kazakhstan has become a valued member in the international community and is a respected voice as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council. For the United States, the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence, this moment not only symbolizes Kazakhstan's remarkable development, but also marks 25 years of cooperation and friendship between our two nations.

Our strategic partnership was founded on a shared interest in nuclear nonproliferation and security. When the Soviet Union dissolved, Kazakhstan inherited the fourth largest nuclear stockpile in the world. Rather than using those resources in unproductive ways, through President Nursultan Nazarbayev's leadership this nuclear arsenal was decommissioned and Kazakhstan has continued to cooperate in these efforts.

Over the 25 years the economic relationship between Kazakhstan and the United States has greatly expanded as well. The Kazakh economy is dynamic and open to the world. From 1993 to 2013 American firms invested more than \$42 billion in Kazakhstan, and trade between our nations is measured in the billions of dollars per year.

The government and the people of Kazakhstan have made great strides in building an economically diverse, multi-ethnic and prosperous country. Kazakhstan exemplifies a country of religious diversity and shows the world how people of various faiths can live together in peace. I congratulate them on that

achievement. In the coming years, I hope to see the cooperation between the United States and Kazakhstan continue to grow as future leaders build on the successful foundation that has already been laid.

HONORING CHIEF KATHLEEN
HARRELL ON HER RETIREMENT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chief Kathleen Harrell, on the occasion of her retirement from the Florida Department of Corrections.

Chief Harrell has given 30 years of distinguished public service to the State of Florida through her knowledge, integrity and leadership. Her tenure at the Florida Department of Corrections began on August of 1986, where she worked as a Field Agent within the Correctional Probation sector. She then spent several years performing professional work investigating, assessing, supervising, counseling, administering, and/or classifying offenders as a Correctional Probation Officer. It was in 1993 when she joined the Office of Inspector General and strived passionately to become the Assistant Chief of Investigations for the Florida Department in January of 2013. Chief Harrell deserves our admiration and respect for her dedication to public service.

Besides working tirelessly to ensure the wellbeing of Florida's citizens, Chief Harrell dedicates time to worship as a member of the New Mount Olive Baptist Church in Ft. Lauderdale, FL since 2011. She has also been an avid cyclist for ten years and frequently participates in fundraising rides for multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS charities. If there's something Chief Harrell loves as much as cycling, it is the Miami Dolphins, being a seasonal ticket holder for around fourteen years now.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to congratulate Chief Kathleen Harrell on her retirement. I wish her the very best of luck in all her future endeavors.

REMEMBERING MR. TOM BAKER

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Tom Baker of Waitsburg, Washington who passed away on November 14, 2016 at the age of 86.

Tom Baker was born on April 17, 1930 in Fort Morgan, Colorado. As a child, he was a member of the Boy Scouts of America, and active in various church, music, and social events. Following his high school graduation, Tom attended the Carnegie Institute of Technology, where he graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Printing Management in 1953. It was during his college years that he met and fell in love with his wife Anita.

Tom's passion and dream from a young age was to work in newspapers. Following positions with various local newspapers in Colorado, Tom and Anita eventually moved to

Waitsburg in 1963, where Tom bought stake in the Waitsburg Times, eventually becoming editor and publisher in 1964.

As publisher of the Waitsburg Times for 27 years, Tom was able to employ his dry wit and unique style while chronicling the life and times of the people of Waitsburg. Tom officially sold his stake in the Waitsburg Times in 1991, but happily contributed to the paper with his weekly column "TOMfoolery" until 2009. Tom understood the importance of providing the citizens of Waitsburg with a weekly print newspaper tailored to their interests and passions.

An active member of his community, Tom enjoyed spending his time working with the Waitsburg Commercial Club, Masonic Lodge No. 16, the Waitsburg Historical Society, the Waitsburg Presbyterian Church Choir and Board of Elders, the Walla Walla Community College Board of Trustees, and the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association among many others.

Tom was also an active and loyal community servant, who ably filled roles on the Waitsburg City Council and served as Mayor of Waitsburg on two separate occasions.

Tom is survived by his wife of 64 years, Anita, his sons Charles and Loyal, and daughter Peggy, as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Tom Baker was a dedicated public servant and important member of the greater Waitsburg community for many years who will be truly missed. His positive spirit, belief in the good of the community, and devotion to his passions was truly admirable. I will fondly remember Tom Baker and share my condolences with his family.

INTRODUCTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT TO ELIMINATE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE
AND PROVIDE FOR THE DIRECT ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT
AND VICE PRESIDENT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a constitutional amendment I introduced today to eliminate the electoral college and provide for the direct election of our nation's President and Vice President.

For the second time in recent memory, and for the fifth time in our history, we have a President-elect, who lost the popular vote.

The reason is because of an antiquated system that was established to prevent citizens from directly electing our nation's President.

That notion—that citizens should be prevented from directly electing the President—is antithetical to our understanding of democracy.

In our country, "We the People," are supposed to determine who represents us in elective office.

Yet, we use an anachronistic process for choosing who will hold the highest offices in the land.

It is time for us to fix this, and that is why I have introduced this amendment today.

When the Founders established the electoral college it was in an era of limited nation-

wide communication. It was premised on a theory that citizens would have a better chance of knowing about electors from their home states than about presidential candidates from out-of-state.

The development of mass media and the internet, however, has made information about presidential candidates easily accessible to U.S. citizens across the country and around the world.

Today, citizens have a far better chance of knowing about out-of-state presidential candidates than knowing about presidential electors from their home states. Most people don't even know who their electors are.

As Thomas Jefferson said, "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might well as require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

Since our nation first adopted our Constitution, "We the People," have amended it repeatedly to expand the opportunity for citizens to directly elect our leaders. What resulted was the following:

The 15th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens to vote, regardless of race.

The 19th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens to vote, regardless of gender.

The 26th Amendment guarantees the right of all citizens 18 years of age and older to vote, regardless of age.

And the 17th Amendment empowers citizens to directly elect U.S. Senators.

We need to empower citizens to directly elect the President and the Vice President of the United States.

I am privileged to serve as Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. My colleagues and I at the Judiciary Committee will be holding a forum next week to examine our outdated presidential election process. I hope members will attend and share their views.

Working together, I know we can fix this historical anomaly, and make our Constitution better reflect the "more perfect Union" to which it aspires.

HONORING MARY KEEHAN

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a leader in our community, Mary Keehan, who is an honoree at the American Irish Association of Westchester Annual Dinner Dance.

Mary was born in White Plains, New York to Peter and Catherine Kevill, who emigrated from Ireland and married in Scarsdale. Mary attended White Plains High School and simultaneously worked part-time at Macy's department store. Eventually graduating with honors