

Mr. Speck has served as an outstanding educator and leader in our community and demonstrates a unique and experienced understanding of our community's needs. He was sworn in for his first term as County Superintendent on January 3, 2011 and was re-elected and sworn in for his second term on January 5, 2015. Mr. Speck is known for his fair-mindedness and his strong belief in the potential of each individual student to learn and develop academically.

During his career, Mr. Speck pursued training in interest-based problem solving and collective bargaining to enhance his skills as a trusted leader, highly skilled problem-solver, and ardent collaborator. Mr. Speck has a solid educational foundation with a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Davis and holds teaching credentials from both California State University, Los Angeles and California State University, Sacramento. Mr. Speck has represented Solano County public schools as a member of many organizations including the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, the Association of California School Administrators and the Workforce Investment Board.

Mr. Speaker, Superintendent Jay Speck has served our community with admirable leadership and dedication for forty years. It is fitting and proper that we honor him here today and extend our best wishes for an enjoyable retirement.

HONORING JIM HARRIS OF  
WAUSAU, WI FOR HIS SERVICE  
TO OTHERS

**HON. SEAN P. DUFFY**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before you today to recognize Mr. Jim Harris of Wausau, Wisconsin for his exceptional service to others.

Mr. Harris worked for more than 30 years in education. First, as a teacher in the Wisconsin Indian Teacher Corps, where he taught children of the Ho Chunk Tribe, and later as one of the first male kindergarten teachers in Wisconsin. Along his journey in education, Mr. Harris also spent two decades as a school administrator and an activist for public health.

During his many years of service in education, Mr. Harris got to know the children of Hmong Refugees who fled war in their home country to seek a better life in Wisconsin. Our state has a vibrant Hmong community that Mr. Harris has grown close to. He founded We Help War Victims, a nonprofit organization, with his wife, Marty, also a public school educator. Founded over 30 years ago, We Help War Victims has been working with refugee families in the Wausau, Wisconsin area, providing dozens of Lao schools with their first libraries, and helping families receive access to medical care.

Since 2006, his organization has been working with villagers in Laos to destroy land mines, bombs, rockets, mortars, and other unexploded ordnance. Mr. Harris' example directly inspired me to fight for this cause in Congress and his advice has directly affected the focus of my efforts. Countless farmers and families across Laos live in safer communities

because of Mr. Harris' work and my community in Wisconsin has been strengthened by the work he and his wife do through We Help War Victims.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today to congratulate Mr. Harris on his accomplishments and work on behalf of others. His selfless demeanor in which he answers the call to serve in our district is truly valued.

IN HONOR OF SERGEANT 1ST  
CLASS JOHN MIMS

**HON. RICHARD HUDSON**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Sergeant 1st Class John Mims of the 82nd Airborne Division, a World War II veteran and Bataan Death March survivor who passed away on Sunday, November 27, 2016. Sergeant Mims was a true American hero and our thoughts and prayers go out to his friends and family as they mourn the loss of this great man.

When his country needed him the most, it was John Mims who answered the call to serve our great nation. After losing his father when he was young, Mims lied about his age in order to join the Army. At the age of 15, Mims served for nearly a year before the Army discovered his true age and discharged him. However, a few short years later Mims re-enlisted in the Army and headed out to the Philippines to begin his training.

After a year in the Philippines, Mims fought alongside his brothers in arms in the Battle of Bataan which culminated in the surrender of 75,000 allied soldiers. The men were then forced to march 65 miles, without food or water, to a prisoner-of-war camp in the Tarlac Province in what became known as the Bataan Death March. One of the greatest atrocities of the entire war, the men suffered beatings, endured torture, and witnessed unimaginable horrors as he faced what can only be described as a living hell. In total more than 10,000 men died during the trek.

Following the war, Mims continued his service in the Army, returning to Japan from 1952 to 1954 as sergeant in charge of the Tokyo Quartermaster Depot. After he retired in 1963, he returned home where he worked in a rug factory and a curtain company. Living in Aberdeen, North Carolina, he became an advocate for other veterans and was a constant presence at ceremonies remembering his fallen comrades. His work in the community made certain that the memories of those lost were not forgotten, and it is that legacy which we celebrate today. While we may have lost this great man, his legacy will live on and we will never forget the sacrifices made by Sergeant Mims or any of those who fought to protect our freedoms against unimaginable dangers.

Mr. Speaker, please join me today in commemorating the life of Sergeant 1st Class John Mims for his service to God and country.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. KEITH ELLISON**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, due to other commitments, I missed the following roll call votes; had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Roll call no. 594. I would have voted no.  
Roll call no. 595. I would have voted no.  
Roll call no. 596. I would have voted no.  
Roll call no. 597. I would have voted no.  
Roll call no. 598. I would have voted yes.  
Roll call no. 599. I would have voted no.  
Roll call no. 600. I would have voted no.

HONORING MR. JOHN SUTTER

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the remarkable life and career of Mr. John Sutter, and to congratulate him on his retirement from the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District.

As an outdoor enthusiast and lifelong resident of Oakland, California, John's life has been dedicated to preserving and protecting the environment of California's Bay Area. Throughout his sixty years in public service, he has been involved in the conservation of over 35,000 acres of land.

John's career in public service began in 1954 when he became an Alameda County deputy district attorney. He stayed in this position until 1965, when he was appointed to the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) by Governor Pat Brown.

John also served as a member of Oakland's City Council for over a decade from 1971–1982, twice holding the position of vice mayor.

In 1982, John was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to serve as a judge on the Alameda County Superior Court. He remained a judge for 14 years until his election in 1996 to the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors.

Over John's illustrious career, he has been directly involved in a variety of community projects and organizations with special emphasis on preserving the natural environment of the Bay Area.

In the 1950s he was prominently involved in the protection of the San Pablo Reservoir and the foundation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline. In 1961, John was the leader in the campaign that preserved Oakland's Snow Park.

In addition to his elected and appointed positions, John was a founding board member of the Greenbelt Alliance; and he has served as a board member for the Alameda County Solid Waste Management Authority, Oakland Charter Revision Committee, Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, Chabot Space and Science Center, Save the Bay, Alameda County Bar Association, California Democratic Council, Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal, and the Metropolitan YMCA.

On behalf of the residents of California's 13th Congressional District, I wish to congratulate Mr. John Sutter on a well-deserved retirement, and thank him for his many years of service to our community.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, on November 30, 2016, I was incorrectly recorded as voting "Nay" on H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016. I wish to reflect my intentions on roll call No. 591, as a "Yea" vote.

## HONORING JOHN D. PRIDNIA

**HON. CANDICE S. MILLER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John D. Pridnia, loving husband, proud father and grandfather, and pillar of our community.

In search of a better life for his family, John moved to Northeast Michigan becoming a small business owner. Over the next 10 years, he became a successful businessman, passionate about building, developing, and creating new ideas, businesses, and adventures.

After raising his three children, he looked to a life of public service. He served two terms as a State Representative and two terms as a State Senator where he served as the Chairman of the Senate Health Policy Committee. Passionate about promoting business, encouraging tourism, and promoting conservation, John was respected by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Upon retiring from the legislature, John married his wife of 19 years Lisa Dailey. Living in the small community of Port Austin, their family grew to include five beautiful grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

In the close-knit community of Port Austin, John was passionate about beautifying and developing the harbor and waterfront, creating spaces the entire community could come together and enjoy, such as a thriving local farmer's market.

Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that the tradition of giving back to our communities is something that makes our nation unique, one that makes this country the greatest in the world and this was a spirit that John embodied throughout his entire career and life. More importantly, he has served as an example for future generations, instilling in them the importance of giving back to the communities and country who have given us all so much.

I ask that my colleagues join me today in honoring John for his lifelong contributions to the 10th District of the great State of Michigan, our children, and the future of this country.

## IN HONOR OF SENATOR ANDREW MAYNARD UPON HIS RETIREMENT

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank an outstanding public servant for his

many years of service to my home state of Connecticut. For ten years, Mr. Andrew Maynard has served as State Senator for the state's 18th Senate district, which includes Griswold, Groton, Stonington, Plainfield, Preston, North Stonington, Sterling and Voluntown. His retirement at the end of his term will conclude a distinguished career of public service that began at the local level many years ago as a borough warden in the Town of Stonington. Andy has been a powerful voice for southeastern Connecticut, earning the respect of both Democratic and Republican colleagues and serving as the Deputy Majority Leader for the Senate Democrats since 2011.

Andy currently serves as chair of the Transportation Committee, and a member of the Internship and Program Review & Investigation Committees. He also served as chair of the Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and a member of the Environment Committee. Andy's unwavering advocacy for our region's natural resources and tourist attractions brought to life the long-delayed Thames River Heritage Park and secured millions of dollars for expansion at the Mystic Seaport, our nation's leading maritime museum. Andy understood the integral role of tourism, not only within the state, but within our region. It was this understanding that guided his leadership as he fought to secure the crucial funding need to dredge the Mystic River and spearhead the Connecticut Treasures program.

Our region will miss Andy's advocacy on the floor of the State Senate, but I am sure he will remain a strong and respected voice in his community. A true gentleman, Andy brought a thoughtful, civilized tone in his campaigns for office and his bipartisan camaraderie which characterized his style in office. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Andy for his tenure as an accomplished public servant, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

## ALL IS BRIGHT

**HON. PETE SESSIONS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of The Armed Forces and Their Families on this Christmas and Holiday Season, with a poetic tribute by Albert Carey Caswell. Let us remember their selfless sacrifice, and give a prayer of thanks for those who are separated by death and distance this Christmas.

Silent Night

Holy Night

As a magnificent hero lays down their life all is Bright

As our Lord smiles at their light all is Calm  
All is Bright

Way up in heaven where your soul took flight!  
Round Yon Virgin Mother and Child

While, all in her tears your Mother so remembers your smile  
Holy Infant so tender and mild

As once all in your Mother's arms the while  
Now sleep in heavenly peace my child

As your war is over my Daughter, my Son  
Silent Night

Holy Night

As your family and your loved ones so miss you this night  
Silent Night

But, your new battle has just begun

As an Angel in The Army of Our Lord, my Daughter my Son All is Calm

All is Bright

And we will hear you on the wind

And we will sleep in Heavenly Peace

As we awake knowing you are watching over us as where you've been  
Until, we meet you once again in heaven where all is bright

And your Brothers and Sisters in Arms will live a good life

For you their best friend by remembering your light  
Silent Night

Holy Night

All is Calm

All is Bright

All because of The Men and Women of The Armed Forces, and Their Families who fight the fight

All is Bright

Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Amen

## PROTECTING VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL CHOICE ACT OF 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 29, 2016*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I submit this statement in support of H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016. I will be unable to submit my recorded vote but I fully support this legislation that ensures that veterans will not be unwittingly exploited by deceptive recruiters.

H.R. 5047 is a bipartisan bill that reinforces our commitment to the success of our service members, on and off the battlefield. The bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to supply all information regarding articulation agreements to service members who wish to use their VA education benefits. The bill will inform service members, in advance, if and how they can transfer credits and avoid unwittingly misusing their VA education benefits.

In 2010, Congress passed the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Improvements Act which expanded educational benefits to include more service members and allows them to use their benefits to receive not only traditional degrees but also apprenticeships, vocational training certifications, and on-the-job training. This expansion was vital in providing access to a variety of educational platforms but some for-profit institutions focused on recruiting and scamming service members out of their benefits. H.R. 5047 provides education career counseling to make sure service members are informed of their options.

## RECOGNIZING ROB AUSTRIAN AND MONICA MOSIMANN

**HON. KEN BUCK**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 5, 2016*

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rob Austrian and Monica Mosimann for their hard work and dedication to the people of Colorado's Fourth District as interns in my Washington, D.C. office for the Fall of 2016.

The work of this young man and woman has been exemplary, and I know they will