

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the department for 68 years of service and in thanking all of the brave volunteers who do not hesitate to drop everything when the community calls in need of help. To all of these men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect our residents I say: "Stay safe."

H.R. 34, THE 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, a bill which aims to authorize and promote biomedical research, mental health, opioid abuse assistance, and advance medical future research, but falls woefully short.

Unfortunately, this bill is a missed opportunity for Congress to take meaningful action to address skyrocketing drug prices. It also falls far short of the funding that is needed to support the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and to address the growing opioid abuse epidemic. I also believe that this bill puts the goals of pharmaceutical and medical device companies ahead of the needs of individuals.

As a Member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee and as an ardent supporter of biomedical research and public health funding, I was disappointed in the inadequate funding levels in this bill. Last year, this bill included \$10 billion in mandatory funding for the NIH. Unfortunately, the revised version that passed the House Floor last week included only \$3.8 billion for the NIH, and it is not mandatory spending.

And to make matters worse, this bill strips \$3.5 billion from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which provides critical investments to improve health outcomes through prevention activities like screenings and public health workforce training. We should be increasing support for public health programs, not robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Additionally, I am concerned that this legislation loosens Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards for approving pharmaceuticals and medical devices. While we do need to ensure that new, lifesaving treatments are available to consumers, we cannot do so at the expense of safety and efficacy. We need to make the FDA's standards stronger—not weaker.

Lastly, despite outcry from constituents and despite months of hearings and press conferences on the issue of rising prescription drug prices, H.R. 34 did not include any provisions to make drugs more affordable.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we have a shared obligation to ensure that ALL Americans have access to equitable, high-quality and affordable healthcare. While this bill does include a few good provisions, like positive steps to address mental health reform, it ultimately puts industry and profits over patients, and I therefore cannot support it.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DAVID SIMAS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service, dedication, and brilliance of our good friend and distinguished Portuguese American, White House Political Director David Simas. After eight years guiding the policy of the Obama Administration it is both fitting and appropriate to honor his service to the United States of America where he helped craft policy that improves the lives of countless Americans.

A self-proclaimed "Kid from Taunton, Massachusetts," Mr. Simas is the son of Portuguese immigrants, Antonio and Deolinda Simas. Although his parents did not attain more than an elementary school education, Mr. Simas ever excelled under their parentage. His father taught him the impact political policy has on everyday lives and his mother instilled in him the importance of family and the support they lend in times of need.

From his upbringing in Taunton, Mr. Simas went on to attend Stonehill College and later Boston College Law School. Returning home after graduation, he started a law practice and launched a political career of his own running for and winning a seat on the school board. Lending his talents to the local Portuguese community, Mr. Simas defended those in need and led successful political movements on behalf his friends and neighbors.

Later, as an advisor to the mayor of Taunton Mr. Simas helped devise a strategy to bring down the city's health care costs, working with the public sector unions to reach an agreement that saved the city money while ensuring access to good health care. Mr. Simas became well known in Massachusetts policy circles, and in 2006, he joined the office of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick where he served as Deputy Chief of Staff.

It was not long after the 2008 election of President Barack Obama that Governor Patrick connected the two, officially introducing Mr. Simas to the President and starting a run of eight years of service to the President and our country.

Calm, unflappable, clinical, and humble are just a few of the words used to describe Mr. Simas. He has taken his knowledge and political acumen and applied them to the service of the American people. He dedicated himself to pass health care reform, bringing coverage to millions who previously were left out of the American health care system.

Mr. Simas has always thought about how the decisions he makes and the issues he fights for impact everyday people. From his childhood in Taunton's Portuguese Village to the West Wing of the White House he has always been an advocate for the disadvantaged and underrepresented. I wish him, his wife Shauna, and daughters Rowan and Payton the best of luck in the years to come. In whatever endeavor he finds himself next, I know he will continue to ask himself the same question President Obama asked of him: "Are you doing something every day to help people?"

I am confident he will.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of

Representatives to recognize the service of Mr. David Simas and his many contributions to the wellbeing of the American people.

HONORING MS. LINDA SEIFERT

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda Seifert upon her retirement from the Solano County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Seifert has represented the Second District on the board since 2008 and served as the Chair of the Board from 2012 through 2014.

Ms. Seifert has been a longtime leader in our state's legal community. She earned her bachelor's degree from the California State University, Fullerton and then went on to complete her law degree at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law. Ms. Seifert led a tremendously successful law career and became the first female partner at the McNamara Law Firm in Walnut Creek, before she went on to serve as General Counsel for the California Dental Association.

Since her election as Supervisor in 2008, Ms. Seifert has been a champion for Solano County's citizens and our community's future. She has worked to preserve the agricultural heritage and resources of our community and to create more park space and recreational services. For instance, Ms. Seifert successfully pushed to dedicate open space in Rockville Hills and secured \$13 million to permanently protect the land for future generations.

Education and responsive social services have also been Ms. Seifert's priorities as supervisor. To protect victims of domestic violence, she secured the site for the Family Justice Center in Fairfield. She believes that investing in members of our community improves both their well-being and our economy.

Mr. Speaker, Supervisor Linda Seifert has been a champion of our community for the past eight years. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor her here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROGER WILLIAMS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call 592 on final passage of H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, I would have voted Aye, which is consistent with my position on this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO GUOWEI QI

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Guowei Qi, a senior at Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa, for earning a perfect score

on his American College Testing (ACT) examination.

Guowei is one of only 2,235 students out of 2.1 million 2017 high school test-takers who earned this very rare honor. He was one of five students in his Valley High School class to earn the top composite score of 36, a milestone that had never before been reached in the school's history. Guowei was able to accomplish this impressive feat while still remaining active in a number of extracurricular activities, including: Science Bowl, Valley High School honors program, concertmaster of the Valley High School Chamber Orchestra, volunteering at Iowa Lutheran Hospital, and organizing "Blank Tales," a non-profit publication by Valley High School students to raise awareness of homelessness in the Des Moines area.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Guowei for his hard-work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating him and in wishing him nothing but continued success.

HONORING THE 1965 INTEGRATION OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA'S WOODLAWN HIGH SCHOOL

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today, we honor six individuals—Myrtice Chamblin, Cynthia Holder, Leon Humphries, Lillie Humphries, Cedric King, and Rita Eileen King—for courageously integrating Woodlawn High School in Birmingham, Alabama during September of 1965. We applaud these six individuals for their noble act to recognize the historic precedence they established and to acknowledge the exceptional bravery they displayed.

The mid-20th century was an extraordinarily turbulent time for Alabama, especially Birmingham. The city and surrounding area had become a crucible for civil rights activity and peaceful protests that were often met with inconceivable hostility. Segregation and discrimination both had a strong grip on Birmingham society, which affected all aspects of life for African Americans. Despite the enactments of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments nearly a century beforehand, Birmingham's black citizens had yet to fully experience the promises that these constitutional changes intended to engender. Thankfully, the Supreme Court's unanimous decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 overturned the long-standing decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which had emboldened and reinforced the ferociousness of "separate but equal."

While these successive legislative modifications and landmark cases created a platform for diversity in theory, racial inclusiveness was still confronted with horrific opposition in actuality. It would take solemn individuals animated with daring spirits to truly produce the social changes needed to foster an integrated and equal United States of America. Today, we honor these six outstanding individuals who are exemplary of the heroism herein described.

The integration of Woodlawn High School by these stellar young people was not an oc-

currence of happenstance. It was not the decision of adults or older citizens who had completed school many years earlier. Instead, it was a strategic act by six underclassmen eager to learn. By boldly encountering aggression and animosity, they knew it was a sacrifice necessary to create a better city, state, and nation.

Disciplined with the tools of non-violence and aided with the support of their caregivers and community, these six champions of equality and freedom that we praise today stood against injustice to impact future generations. Armed with nothing more than a consciousness of integrity and dignity, these six young people chose to walk in the line of danger and take a stand for human equality.

In the spirit of grace and appreciation, we salute Myrtice Chamblin, Cynthia Holder, Leon Humphries, Lillie Humphries, Cedric King, and Rita Eileen King for their act of valor. Let their testimony and story of triumph continue to be a lesson to us all as we stand on their shoulders to combat oppression. Most importantly, let us not be remiss in our effort to shine light on exemplars that have moved mountains for us to walk through and paved paths for us to walk on. The routes we travel are easier because of you.

TRIBUTE TO GARY MERSON

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I, together with Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security Ranking Member ZOE LOFGREN of California, would like to pay tribute to Mr. Gary Merson for his outstanding service to the House of Representatives and the House Judiciary Committee in particular. For the past 15 months, Gary has served as the chief counsel to the Judiciary Committee's Immigration Subcommittee.

A native of Lewiston, Maine, Gary's passionate dedication to the advancement of immigration law and policy is reflected in his distinguished 18-year legal career spanning private practice, non-profit advocacy, and government service. Gary will return as the Acting Director of the Office of the Ombudsman at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, where he has served since 2005.

Gary previously served as counsel to the Immigration Subcommittee from February 2012 through December 2012 during which he played an important role in advancing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. Prior to joining the Ombudsman's Office, Gary was Government Affairs Counsel with Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy from 1999 to 2005, and prior to that an Advocacy Associate with the American Immigration Lawyers Association from 1998 to 1999. Gary is a graduate of Tulane Law School and Vanderbilt University.

Gary's wide-ranging expertise on immigration law and policy and his longstanding leadership in the area of employment-based immigration have greatly benefitted both sides of the aisle during the 114th Congress and this Committee in particular. Gary was exceptionally instrumental in the efforts of 225 Congressional Democrats (186 in the House and 39 in

the Senate) to file an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in *United States v. Texas*, a case considering whether certain aspects of President Obama's executive actions on immigration will be allowed to move forward. Gary also led committee efforts on a variety of immigration issues in the areas of refugees, immigration enforcement, high-skilled immigration, the EB-5 program, the H2-A/H2-B programs and executive authority.

Although Gary entered the chief counsel role during a time of transition, he was able to handle committee matters with ease and grace. His rhetorical skills and natural political inclinations made the transition seamless. Gary's professionalism, dedication to committee business and pleasant demeanor earned him the universal respect of members and his colleagues. Gary is easily approachable and able to provide a witty remark even during difficult moments. While his guidance and leadership on immigration law and policy will be sorely missed, we are pleased that he will continue to serve immigrants and the American people through his work at the Ombudsman's Office.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud Gary's tireless, principled and loyal public service to the U.S. House of Representatives and the American people and wish him every success in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING JUSTIN TAYLOR AS AN OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERV- ANT

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and commitment of my Deputy Director of Constituent Services, Mr. Justin Taylor, for his tireless dedication to the residents of Florida's Ninth Congressional District.

Throughout his tenure with my district office, Justin has proven himself to be a vital part of our team. As a caseworker, he has collaborated with management to improve our case-work system so that my constituents could better receive meaningful, timely responses to their requests for assistance.

Although Justin is not a native of Central Florida, his commitment to serving our diverse community is apparent. Since joining my office in 2014, he has made a positive difference in the lives of countless individuals. Some highlights of his work include assisting veterans in obtaining critical financial benefits, as well as helping to secure medical care for the sick and elderly. Furthermore, as an advocate for LGBT rights in Florida and across the country, Justin played an important role in assisting family members of the deceased following the tragedy at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando.

As the 114th Congress comes to an end, so too will Justin's tenure in my office. I wish him all the best in the next stage of his career in public service.