

I was honored to recently speak at the 'Border to Border Broadband: Better Together' conference, which was sponsored by the Blandin Foundation and the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development. More than 170 participants came together and agreed on a vision statement for the future of broadband of Minnesota. Today, Congressman PETERSON and I rise in strong support of that vision, which states that "All Minnesotans will be able to use convenient, affordable world class broadband networks that enable us to survive and thrive in our communities and across the globe."

The fact is, we need high-speed broadband in our rural communities. It's a necessity required to help grow our small town rural economy and compete, start new businesses, create new jobs, attract new people and modernize the education and health care services so essential to quality of life. Across our expansive and diverse district the Blandin Foundation is working hard to make sure rural communities have access to world-class high-speed broadband internet.

Once again, we would like to thank the Blandin Foundation for all they do to strengthen rural Minnesota through their many important programs, in addition to their work on rural broadband.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT C. MORALES

HON. WILL HURD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Mr. Robert C. Morales.

Mr. Morales passed away on Tuesday, February 9, 2016. He was well known in Van Horn, Texas for his outstanding leadership in the community. Not only did he provide Van Horn with a timely and reliable news source, but he also mentored unemployed youth, played the organ at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, and was a member of a local band, Los Pecadores. Mr. Morales also served on the Culberson-Allamoore ISD School Board, Culberson County Property Tax Appraisal District Board, and the Town of Van Horn Zoning Board.

Mr. Morales was raised in Van Horn, graduated from Van Horn High School in 1976, and earned a college degree from the University of Texas at Austin. After graduation, he worked for the Laredo Morning News and the City of Laredo, later accepting jobs at Enron and Dr Pepper. His contributions to the town of Van Horn and the 23rd Congressional District of Texas have been integral to the community and will not be forgotten. On behalf of the 23rd Congressional District of Texas, I thank Mr. Morales for his involvement in Van Horn and his dedication to serving others. May he rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING MRS. JUANITA PAYNE-GALBREATH AS THE OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mrs. Juanita Payne-Galbreath as the Okaloosa County, Florida, Education Support Professional of the Year. Mrs. Payne-Galbreath has proven to be a truly exceptional mentor whose impact extends far beyond her students, and I am proud to recognize her success and outstanding achievements.

Mrs. Payne-Galbreath graduated from Niceville High School before attending Pensacola Junior College. After completing her studies, Mrs. Payne-Galbreath joined the Okaloosa County School District, where she has served thousands of students over the last 18 years and has filled numerous important roles. She began her education career at Combs New Heights as an assistant, lunchroom monitor, and Exceptional Student Education classroom assistant, before continuing her career at Fort Walton Beach High School where she worked for five years in several capacities. She then moved to her current position at Crestview High School, where she is as an ESE paraprofessional.

Outside of school, Mrs. Payne-Galbreath—a loving wife to her husband, Joshua and mother to their ten children—still finds time to serve Okaloosa County students, going far above and beyond the core responsibilities of her job. Her dedication to the students of Okaloosa County and her community is exemplified by the "Showers of Blessings Nook," a service she created that provides high school students and their families basic needs such as—shoes, toiletries, and food gift cards.

Northwest Florida is grateful to have such a compassionate individual working with our youth. Without question, her tangible contributions to her students are appreciated. It is Mrs. Payne-Galbreath's love, faith, and nurturing character, however, for which we are most grateful.

Mr. Speaker, the Okaloosa County Education Support Professional of the Year award is a true reflection of Mrs. Payne-Galbreath's steadfast dedication to the students of Okaloosa County. I am privileged to recognize Juanita for her accomplishments and her continuing commitment to excellence. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating her and thanking her for her dedication to serving the students, teachers, and families of the Northwest Florida community. We wish Mrs. Payne-Galbreath all the best for continued success.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, ANTI-SEMITISM, AND RULE OF LAW IN THE OSCE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about human rights crises in Eu-

rope and Eurasia. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, many people expected that freedom, democracy, and peace, would spread throughout Europe and Eurasia. And yet now, the religious freedom of Christians, and people of other faiths, is being regularly violated. Russia invaded its neighbor Ukraine, illegally annexed Crimea, and is fueling and funding violent proxies in the eastern Donbas region of that country. Deadly anti-Semitism is again stalking European Jewish communities. The worst refugee and migrants' crisis in Europe since World War II has engulfed the continent. Autocrats are using the law, and acting outside the law, to crush democratic opposition to their despotism.

Violent anti-Semitic attacks increased 100 to 400 percent in some European countries between 2013 and 2014. Anti-Semitism, and the evil goal of killing Jewish people, is hardwired into ISIS and those it inspires. Perhaps no other group in Europe is more at risk from ISIS attacks than the European Jewish community. That is why I authored House Resolution 354 as a blueprint for vital actions that are needed to prevent another Paris, Brussels, or Copenhagen. The House of Representatives passed it unanimously and I intend to hold a hearing over the coming weeks to explore what is necessary to ensure these actions are taken.

In Crimea, the occupying authorities have targeted and retaliated against the Crimean Tatar people for opposing the annexation and the rule that has followed. Crimean Tatars have been arrested, detained, interrogated, and sometimes charged with extremism, illegal assembly, or belonging to an unregistered religious group. Religious minorities, including the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, have likewise been repressed. Crimeans who opposed or oppose the Russian takeover of Crimea, or have been unwilling to seek a Russian passport, have been at risk of a crackdown. Restrictions have proliferated, including even on the teaching of the Ukrainian language or access to Ukrainian culture.

Repression is also rife in Azerbaijan. The Commission recently held a hearing on the terrible plight of political prisoners in Azerbaijan, particularly the imprisonment of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Khadija Ismayilova. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Azerbaijan leads all of the countries in Eurasia in jailing journalists. In 2015, the government imprisoned many well-known activists, including Anar Mammadli, the courageous head of EMDS, the leading election monitoring organization in Azerbaijan. He spoke the truth about the fraudulent 2013 presidential election and is still paying the price. I met with Anar's father—a very gentle man—just a few months after Anar was arrested and saw how Anar's family is suffering from this injustice.

More than 40 years ago, all the countries of Europe, the United States, and Canada, formed the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to prevent and respond to these kinds of crises. This week, I chaired a hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission, where we heard testimony from Ambassador Michael Link, Director of the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Mr. Speaker, his testimony was a reminder of the serious threats to European Jewish

communities, Christians and other religious minorities, and to the rule of law in Europe and Eurasia. We must remain vigilant and ensure that the United States, as an original participating State of the OSCE, strongly supports the OSCE's efforts to ensure European Jewish communities are safe and secure, that Christians and other religious minorities are free to fully practice their faith, and that the rule of law prevails.

RECOGNIZING LIFELONG EDUCATOR DR. AUBREY W. BONNETT

HON. KATHLEEN M. RICE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Aubrey W. Bonnett, a resident of New York's Fourth Congressional District and a life-long educator.

Throughout his 43-year career in higher education, Dr. Bonnett has achieved tremendous success as a scholar of immigration, race, sociology and diasporic studies, particularly with relation to our nation's vibrant African American, West Indian and Caribbean communities.

Dr. Bonnett currently serves as a professor emeritus in the department of American Studies at the State University of New York (SUNY)—Old Westbury, where he also previously served as the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. Dr. Bonnett is also the dean emeritus of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences at the California State University—San Bernardino and was the first black Dean hired at the University. Having authored and coauthored four books and more than one hundred scholarly articles, Dr. Bonnett is truly one of the preeminent sociologists in the state of New York. Dr. Bonnett has dedicated his life to exploring and shedding light on the immigrant experience in the United States, and as a native of British Guyana, he is a testament to the incredible and critical contributions that immigrants have made to American academia.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Bonnett on his retirement and on an incredible career. It is truly an honor to serve as his representative in Congress.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBEN GALLEGO

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for one roll call vote on Tuesday, February 9, 2016. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Roll Call Vote Number 64—9/11 Memorial Act—yes.

HONORING LAURIE HARKNESS, PH.D., ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to join the many family, friends, and colleagues who have gathered as Dr. Laurie Harkness, founder and Director of the VA Connecticut Healthcare System's Errera Community Care Center, celebrates her retirement after decades of dedicated service to our community's veterans.

To say that Laurie is a remarkable public servant is an understatement. During her tenure with the VA Connecticut Healthcare System, Laurie has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to ensuring that our veterans are receiving the best possible care and have access to the programs, services, and resources they need to live healthy, independent, fulfilling lives. While her contributions to veterans care are innumerable, the most well-known is the Errera Community Care Center which she founded more than twenty years ago.

Over the course of its history, the Errera Center has evolved into one of the leading centers of innovation in psychosocial rehabilitation and in the integration of the psychosocial and biomedical approaches. Serving veterans struggling with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders, homelessness, and/or aging, the team of multidisciplinary mental health professionals at the Errera Center work together to provide an array of community-based rehabilitative programs including day and crisis intervention programs, vocational programs, housing programs, homeless outreach and advocacy and case management programs. Providing a myriad of support to hundreds of veterans every year, the Errera Center has been nationally recognized for its exceptional model of care that emphasizes evidenced-based clinical programs provided in conjunction with a comprehensive network of community partnerships and repeatedly been awarded status as a VA Center of Excellence for the Care of Individuals with Mental Illness.

Laurie's work has also been recognized with numerous local, state and national awards and recognitions. She is the recipient of the Olin E. Teague Award, the highest VA clinical award given, as well as the distinguished Eli Lilly Lifetime Achievement Award for her work in developing programs that assist veterans with serious mental illnesses reintegrate back into their own communities. She has been recognized by Vietnam Veterans of America for her service and dedication to Vietnam veterans and their families and was awarded the "Excellence in Community Mental Health Services" award from NAMI, the first non-MD recipient and first VA employee to be so honored. Her legacy of service will serve as a standard for which to strive for generations to come.

I would be remiss if I did not extend a personal note of thanks to Laurie for her many years of guidance and assistance. Over my tenure in Congress, Laurie has been an invaluable resource for myself, my staff, and my constituents. Her expertise, compassion, and leadership has made all the difference and I consider myself fortunate to have had so many opportunities to work with her.

Laurie Harkness is a reflection of the very best in public service and her presence will certainly be missed by all of those fortunate enough to have worked with her as well as the countless veterans who have benefitted from her outstanding work. Today, as she reflects on her career with the VA, she can be proud of the indelible mark she has left on the agency. It is my great honor to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Laurie as she celebrates her retirement and extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to her for her many years of service. I wish her all the best for many more years of health and happiness as she enjoys her retirement.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION, INCORPORATED & THE 1976 CLASS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 12, 2016

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 40th Anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Incorporated (CBCF) and the 1976 Class of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Established in 1976, this non-profit, non-partisan education and research institution was founded by Nira Hardon Long, Albert L. Nellum and Congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke (CA). The CBCF's commitment to advancing the global black community by developing leaders, informing policy, and educating the public has not wavered and will remain steadfast for many years to come.

One of the CBCF's innovative initiatives is its virtual library project called 'Avoice.' Avoice: African American Voices in Congress launched in 2006 and has received over 27 million hits to date. Through this virtual portal people from around the world log onto the Avoice website to find out about the legislative work done by African American members of Congress.

The CBCF and the CBC have collaborated for many years on policy issues that would uplift the African American community in the United States including major laws like the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and legislation that created the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Even before the CBCF or CBC were created, African American members of Congress, black civil rights leaders, and others have been on the forefront advocating for criminal justice reform, environmental justice, voting rights protection, and economic empowerment for African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, when CBCF was founded in 1976, there were 17 members of the Congressional Black Caucus Congress who stood together to empower America's neglected citizens and to address their legislative concerns.

These members are—former Representatives Yvonne B. Burke (CA), Shirley A. Chisholm (NY), William Clay, Sr. (MO), Cardiss W. Collins (IL), Charles C. Diggs, Jr. (MI), Ron Dellums (CA), Harold Ford, Sr. (TN), Augustus F. Hawkins (CA), Barbara C. Jordan (TX), Ralph H. Metcalfe (IL), Parren J. Mitchell (MD), Robert N.C. Nix, Sr. (PA), Louis Stokes