

highlights of 2015 was the refugee crisis that has taken the world by storm. The worst humanitarian crisis of the year has roiled this country, causing doubt and confusion for leaders across the nation.

The failure of the President's administration to stand behind its so called "red lines" that were imposed upon the Assad regime during the years of the Syrian Civil War quickly allowed the cruel Syrian dictator to gain comfort as he continued carrying out his brutal atrocities against innocent civilians. Our shortcomings undoubtedly contributed to the refugee crisis. Although our influence in the region did not lead to the instability of the nation, as the strongest and leading democratic nation of the world, we needed—but failed—to take required actions and stand ground by the promising words that we first declared, thus unfortunately giving Bashar Al-Assad a leeway.

Eventually, conflicting messages faced our country. As Russia began to heavily intervene in the troubling Arab nation, our country began to scramble for a settled negotiation. In the mean time, lives were still being lost, homes were still being destroyed, and futures were still being gambled with. Yet, there remained a big elephant questioning his stance in the room: what shall be done with the millions of citizens-turned-refugees who had no where else to go? Thus, the issue of whether or not to accept Syrian refugees swiftly took America by storm. History began to repeat itself as state governors sought to ban refugees from their lands, striking a similar response to that of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, when, in the time of World War II, refused to let Jewish refugees in America. It was evident that we needed to take measures to help the lives of those who were forced to flee from Syria to foreign lands with nothing left, while at the same time, to not risk minimizing our national security.

Logistics aside, it is clear that the Syrian refugee crisis has been a sad burden that, as a leading nation, we needed to face head-on. Failure to unite and stand strong with any decisions that we as a nation decide upon unfortunately leads to a disruption of tranquility. We must unite as a country and come to decisive actions in our future international encounters.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 14, I was unavoidably detained. As a result, I missed three recorded votes:

On rollcall Number 113, passage of House Concurrent Resolution 121. As a strong supporter, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall Number 112, passage of House Concurrent Resolution 175. As a cosponsor, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall Number 111, passage of S. 2426, had I been present I would have voted "yes."

CONGRATULATING ALEC HAGAN FOR HIS FIRST PLACE WIN IN THE 2016 MISSOURI STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Alec Hagan for his first place win in the 2016 Class 4, 138 pound weight class, Missouri State Wrestling Championship.

Alec and his coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to Eureka High School and their local community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Alec for a job well done.

HONORING RON JIBSON

HON. JASON CHAFFETZ

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ron Jibson who, on April 12, 2016, will be honored as the 37th "Giant in our City." This award honors those individuals with exceptional and distinguished service and extraordinary professional achievement. Ron is an incredibly deserving recipient.

Ron's contributions to the Utah business community have been transformative, and his work to solve important issues has transformed our state. Ron currently serves as President and CEO of Questar Corporation, a natural gas and energy company. Not only is Ron an industry leader, he has contributed countless hours of service to our community. He currently serves as a trustee for Utah State University and serves on the boards of the Utah Symphony/Opera and the Women's Leadership Institute. Countless Utahns have, and continue to be, impacted by Ron's work.

I am honored to recognize Ron Jibson as a true "giant" in Utah's community today. I thank him for his commitment to bettering Utah, and his influence in effecting change.

IN RECOGNITION OF BILL BURKE, RECIPIENT OF THE GREATER PITTSBURGH FRIENDLY SONS OF SAINT PATRICK SWINGLE AWARD

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bill Burke, who on March 17, 2016 will receive the Swingle Award from the Greater Pittsburgh Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick. For nearly three decades, Bill's dedication and service to the community has produced many ambitious pupils and hardworking students.

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and son of William P. Burke and Nora Barrett Burke, Bill is married to the former Maripat Seitzinger of

Scranton. They have four children: William, Jack, Peter, and Maeve.

Bill is a graduate of Scranton Preparatory School, the University of Scranton, and the University of Notre Dame. He has been employed as a history teacher at Scranton Prep since 1990. In recognition of his contributions in teaching, he received The Rochelle Olifson Teacher of Impact Award from the University of Southern California, the Rose Kelly Award from the University of Scranton, and has been a finalist for the Disney Teacher of the Year. He has also served Scranton Prep as Director of Admissions and Assistant Director of the Richmond Summer Service Program.

Under Bill's direction, the Scranton Prep cross-country team has won four PIAA State championships and twelve PIAA District II Championships. In his sixteen years at the helm of both cross-country and track, Prep has produced 18 all-state athletes and three state champions, and three athletes have garnered regional and national honors.

As an all-state performer himself, Bill was elected to Scranton Prep's Athletic Honor Roll. He is also a member of the University of Scranton's Wall of Fame, and was elected to the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame, North Eastern Pennsylvania Division, in 2008. Bill was included in the Scranton Times Tribune's Top 25 Coaches of All Time list in 2005.

Bill is a member of the John F. Kennedy Council Number 372 Knights of Columbus, Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick, and the AOH Wolf Tone Division Pittston. He has been a coaching instructor for Special Olympics. He is a founding member of the Diocese of Scranton Cross-Country League and is on the staff of the North Pocono football team as the speed and conditioning coach. He is currently the cross-country coach at the University of Scranton.

It is an honor to recognize Bill for all of his community contributions, and I congratulate him for receiving the Swingle Award. I am grateful for his efforts to develop young people into leaders.

WHAT MAKES THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN CONGRESS SO CHALLENGING?

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight from across the political spectrum that sheds a light on the concerns of our younger constituents. Giving voice to their priorities will hopefully instill a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Ann Johnson attends Kempner High School in Sugar Land, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, what makes the political process in Congress so challenging?

I used to think that Congress was largely ineffective. However, after taking a semester of AP Government, I realized that the legislative body was supposed to be that way. Congress isn't supposed to react quickly, rather, it is supposed to take its time and deliberate over the best course of action. The large number of political checkpoints a bill must pass naturally complicates the process. These checkpoints ensure that the bill is the best version it can be and brings the greatest good to the greatest number of people.

However, there are many extraneous factors that make the political process more challenging. One is the very apparent political divide in Congress. When Democrats only support bills created by Democrats and vice versa, the political process becomes nearly impossible to maneuver. Many great ideas and proposals for our country get lost in the partisan struggle or passed bills, heavy with compromises, never amount to any real change. Too often, politicians are more concerned with party approval instead of the needs of the American people. The deep divide in Congress and unwillingness to engage in across the aisle collaboration makes the political process extremely challenging.

Another factor in the political process is the influence of wealthier Americans in the decision-making process. In recent times, Americans of higher socioeconomic have been able to contribute heavily to elections and legislation. After the Citizens United vs FEC ruling, corporations and unions were able to spend unlimited sums of money on campaigns. This allows wealthier Americans to yield more power in the election and legislative fronts. They are able to influence lawmakers to vote their way, instead of voting for the benefit of all Americans. When lawmakers are forced to vote for their own personal benefit or for the benefit of their financial contributors, it makes the political process incredibly challenging.

Lastly, lack of interest in the political process by the public is a challenge. As Americans, we have been blessed with the right to participate in our democratic process. From voting for candidates to speaking out about different laws, Americans are able to influence the political process in many ways. However, too few Americans take advantage of these privileges. When all Americans unite for a cause, true change is certainly possible. Leading America in the right direction requires the participation of all Americans and politicians working together hand in hand.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 2016 STATE REPRESENTATIVE DAVID FLYNN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2016 State Representative David Flynn Scholarship Fund and to honor the man for whom it was named: David Flynn, loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, friend, neighbor, and former Dean of the Massachusetts State House.

The 2016 State Representative David Flynn Scholarship Fund, awarded to one student from the Plymouth campus at Quincy College this year, will make higher education more accessible to the most deserving student. This Scholarship Fund was established to honor David's dedication to Plymouth County residents and his lifelong passion for education.

Still a student at Bridgewater State College, David Flynn began his first political step as Bridgewater Parks Commissioner in 1957. He would go on to never lose a campaign in his political career, which included serving as the Representative of the 8th Plymouth District in the Massachusetts State House. In addition to his tenure in the State House and as an advisor in the Dukakis and King Administrations, David is remembered for his instrumental work in the expansion and success of Bridgewater State University in the decades after his graduation. He was crucial in securing funding for every campus building built since 1965 and played a decisive role in changing the name of the institution.

After retiring from political life in 2010, David returned to his home in Bridgewater to spend time with his wife Barbara, nine children, thirty grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. On December 10, 2015 at the age of 82, surrounded by his loving family and friends, David peacefully left this world—but his memory and legacy will live on in the lives of the thousands of Massachusetts students and residents who directly benefited from his commitment and dedication to public service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring the life of an extraordinary public servant. David Flynn epitomized the meaning of civic responsibility, and I celebrate the great work that the scholarship fund in his name will continue to do.

HONORING FLORIDA'S TEACHERS

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of outstanding public school teachers in Florida's 16th Congressional District.

I was once told that children are 25 percent of the population, but they are 100 percent of the future.

And it's true. The education of a child is an investment, not only in that student, but in the future of our country.

Therefore, I established the Congressional Teacher Awards to honor educators for their ability to teach and inspire students.

An independent panel has chosen the following teachers for Florida's 16th District 2016 Congressional Teacher Award for their accomplishments as educators:

Mr. Lorenzo Browner, for his accomplishments as an ESE teacher at Florine Abel Elementary School in Sarasota.

Ms. Charlotte Latham, for her accomplishments as a fifth grade teacher at BD Gullett Elementary School in Bradenton.

Mr. Todd Brown, for his accomplishments as a civics teacher at Sarasota Military Academy Prep in Sarasota.

Dr. Jennifer Jaso, for her accomplishments as a social studies teacher at Sarasota Middle School in Sarasota.

Ms. Judith Black, for her accomplishments as a French teacher at Pine View School in Osprey.

Ms. Stacie Cratty for her accomplishments as a dance teacher at Manatee School for the Arts in Palmetto.

On behalf of the people of Florida's 16th District I congratulate each of these out-

standing teachers and offer my sincere appreciation for their service and dedication.

RECOGNIZING DR. CHRISTOPHER L. MARKWOOD

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, in a world riddled with self-service and promotion, true public servants are hard to come by. But in Georgia's higher education system, we are fortunate to have selfless and strong men and women to inspire our next generation. It is in the defense of hard work and promotion of academic excellence that Georgia's students recognize a true leader. And with great honor, I would like to recognize a new leader in Georgia and my friend, Dr. Christopher L. Markwood.

On March 31, 2016, President Markwood will be formally inaugurated as the fifth president of Columbus State University. His confirmation comes without doubt, as his roles at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and the University of Wisconsin-Superior proved his ability to lead.

President Markwood has already made a strong impact on both Columbus State University and the Columbus community. Since President Markwood was hired in June of 2015, Columbus State University has seen a spike in enrollment, and now serves 8,440 students from across the state and nation. The university recorded one of its largest fundraising years ever, bringing them close to their \$106 million comprehensive goal. Columbus State University is now the home of the "TSYS Center for Cybersecurity", which trains our students in the growing and in-demand field of computer science and network security. Much of this would not have been possible without President Markwood's passion for the university's success.

It has been a privilege to work with President Markwood during my last term in Congress and I look forward to watching Columbus State University continue to excel under his leadership. I wish President Markwood, his wife Bridget, and their daughter all the best as they continue to serve Cougar Nation.

RECOGNIZING WILLIAM KIRKMAN FOR BEING AWARDED THE SPRINGFIELD AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S 2016 SPRINGFIELDIAN AWARD

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize business leader William Kirkman for recently being named winner of the 2016 Springfieldian Award at the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting.

As the Springfield Chamber of Commerce's most acclaimed decoration for more than 50 years, the annual Springfieldian Award honors an individual who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and dedication to the Springfield, Missouri, community.