

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.

As the first in his family to attend college, Kirkman graduated from Missouri State University in 1969. He was hired by Baird, Kurtz & Dobson (BKD) accounting firm out of college and rose through their ranks; He climbed from associate to partner and eventually became the firm's Chief Operating Officer in 2004.

Described as a man with a heart of gold, Kirkman was admired and respected by his peers. He demonstrated a passion for helping those who worked under him to blossom professionally, and is considered to have been an early pioneer in helping women to break into the accounting profession.

In addition to his impressive professional career, Kirkman has served in numerous leadership roles for Springfield area organizations. Currently, he holds the Chair position of the Board of Directors of City Utilities of Springfield but, in the past, he served at the Chair positions of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors, the Springfield/Branson National Airport board of directors, and Springfield's Center City Development Corporation. He also served as President of the Springfield Business Development Corporation in 1995, and received the Outstanding Alumni Award from Missouri State University in 2004. Lastly though, and certainly not the least of his accomplishments, Kirkman also achieved the rank of Captain while serving in the Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, William Kirkman—who I consider a personal friend—is not only a pillar of the Springfield community, but has been a mentor and inspiration for countless individuals that he has interacted with along his storied career. I urge my colleagues to join me as I extend my appreciation for his service to Missouri's Seventh Congressional District.

WOMEN ONCE AGAIN MADE HISTORY IN 2015

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.

Alesondra Cruz attends George Ranch High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: Women Once Again Made History in 2015.

Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver became the first women to graduate from the Army Ranger School in August 2015, the first year it was open to women. The course is a notoriously difficult feat in army training and has proven impossible to copious soldiers in the past. It results in

strong leaders, pushing soldiers to not only their physical, but mental threshold. The sixty-one day long course includes brutal obstacles and a 12 mile march to be completed in three hours. Ninety-four men and 2 women beat the grueling course.

It has long been established that women can play an efficacious role in the military. The extent of that role, however, is still debated. In November 2012, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of four service women and the Service Women's Action Network. They stated that plaintiff, Maj. Mary Jennings Hegar, an Air National Guard helicopter pilot, served her country with the utmost strength and honor, yet was unable to obtain a leadership position. In 2013, then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced that the army would lift its ban on women serving in combat roles. This announcement was strongly pushed by the armed service chiefs themselves and led to evaluation by the armed forces. When the two women completed the course, the 75th Ranger Regiment had not opened its doors to women or changed its policy. Consequently, Griest and Haver could not enter the 75th Ranger Regiment with their fellow graduates. However, their completion of the course and inability to serve with their peers sparked discussion over whether women should serve at this level or solely have the pride of wearing their well-earned Ranger Tabs. This discussion may have been a factor in Defense Secretary Ash Carter's recent announcement that all combat jobs are now open to women.

Whether a person believes that women should be fully integrated or not, this accomplishment has opened conversation in an unprecedented way. Many people defend their stance on integrating women due to women's perceived physical limitation; however, Griest and Haver have proven just as capable as their male counterparts. As an eighteen year old, my thoughts immediately go to the Selective Service Act and what role integration of women may have on it. If women are fully active in the military, will we be asked to register? Regardless of the final decision for the Ranger Regiment or Selective Service Act, there is no doubt that this event has left an imprint on how Americans see the role of women in our military.

When asked about her accomplishment, Griest said, "We felt like we were contributing as much as the men, and we felt that they felt that way, too." There is no doubt that these women have a desire to serve our country with pride and strength. Their dedication to America has inspired women and men alike, and positions women to serve their country for many years to come.

IN CELEBRATION OF MABELLE M. SELLAND'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 90th birthday of Ms. Mabelle M. Selland, a wonderful friend and loving community member.

Mabelle Maasen Selland was born on March 7, 1926, in Chicago, Illinois, and lived there until the first grade when her family moved to Omaha, Nebraska. Mabelle graduated from Bensen High School in 1944, and later moved to California with her mother where she settled in Pasadena. Mabelle then

moved to the Bay Area at the age of 19 to become a keypunch operator. Mabelle later came to Fresno at the invitation of friends to work as an operator for Pacific Gas and Electric and saved enough money to enroll at Fresno State College. It was at Fresno State where Mabelle met Harold "Bud" Selland. Mabelle and Bud fell in love and were married in 1951. They raised three children, Julie, Eric, and Bethany and were married for 55 years until Bud's passing in 2006.

Mabelle was an accomplished young lady who always displayed a strong passion for preserving, and improving her community, and that passion has continued throughout her life. She has dedicated her entire life to involving herself in various community activities. She worked as a Social Worker for Fresno County from 1950–1955, served as the People to People president, and as chairwoman for the Fresno Moulmein, Burma Sister City, where she received two awards for outstanding service from the National Sister City Conference in Washington D.C.

In 1972, Mabelle received her Master's Degree in Asian History from Fresno State, and continued her work in the community. From 1973 to 1979, Mabelle served as the Executive Director for the Fresno City and County Historical Society. She worked diligently to successfully enter Kearney Mansion on the National Register of Historic Places. She received a state Historic Preservation Grant to restore Kearney Mansion, and created seven ethnic history exhibits, restored costume collection and exhibited over 200 pieces.

In 1973, Mabelle became an instrumental force behind starting a movement to save the Old Administration building on the campus of Fresno City College. Mabelle and her friend, Ephraim Smith, saved the building from the planned demolition. After 38 years from her initial suggestion that the community should save the landmark, the building was finally restored and re-opened in 2011.

In the 1980's, Mabelle served as the Cultural Arts Manager for the City of Fresno Cultural Arts office, where she eventually retired from in 1994. After her retirement from the City of Fresno, Mabelle traveled the world with her family and friends and continued to serve on the County Historic Records and Landmarks Commission. She wrote about Southeast Asian history and coordinated performances and village festivals at the Southeast Asian Business Conference.

Furthermore, Mabelle founded the Heritage Fresno, a historic preservation organization in 2003, and served on the County Tourism Committee in 2004.

It goes without saying that Mabelle continues to be a force to be reckoned with, even at the young age of 90. Throughout the many roads she has traveled, we thank Mabelle for the many lives that she has touched along the way. It is for these reasons that we join Mabelle Selland's family and friends in wishing her a blessed 90th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating a woman who has dedicated her life to public service. Mabelle's many accomplishments within the community are a direct reflection of her strong dedication and perseverance. We wish her continued health and happiness in the years to come.